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THE
PATHFINDER:

OR,
THE INLAND SEA.

BY
THE AUTHOR OF
"THE PIONEERS," "LAST OF THE MOHICANS," "PRAIRIE," &c.

—— Here the heart
May give a useful lesson to the head,
And Learning wiser grow without his books.
COWPER.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
VOL. II.

PHILADELPHIA:
LEA AND BLANCHARD,
.....
1840.

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(2)

THE PATHFINDER.

CHAPTER I.

"Thou glorious mirror, where the Almighty's form
Glasses itself in tempests ; in all time,
Calm or convulsed — in breeze, or gale, or storm,
Icing the pole, or in the torrid clime
Dark heaving ; — boundless, endless, and sublime —
The image of Eternity ; the throne
Of the Invisible ; even from out thy slime
The monsters of the deep are made ; each zone
Obeys thee ; thou goest forth, dread, fathomless, alone."

BYRON.

As the day advanced, that portion of the inmates of the vessel which had the liberty of doing so, appeared on deck. As yet, the sea was not very high, from which it was inferred, that the cutter was still under the lee of the islands ; but it was apparent to all who understood the lake, that they were about to experience one of the heavy autumnal gales of that region. Land was nowhere visible ; and the horizon, on every side, exhibited that gloomy void, which lends to all views, on vast bodies of water, the sublimity of mystery. The swells, or, as landsmen term them, the waves, were short and curling, breaking of necessity sooner than the longer seas of the ocean ; while the element itself, instead of presenting that beautiful hue, which rivals the deep tint of the southern sky, looked green and angry, though wanting in the lustre that is derived from the rays of the sun.

The soldiers were soon satisfied with the prospect, and, one by one, they disappeared, until none were left on deck, but the crew, the serjeant, Cap, Pathfinder, the Quarter-Master, and Mabel. There was a shade on the brow of the

latter, who had been made acquainted with the real state of things ; and who had fruitlessly ventured an appeal in favour of Jasper's restoration to the command. A night's rest, and a night's reflection, appeared also to have confirmed the Pathfinder in his opinion of the young man's innocence ; and he, too, had made a warm appeal in behalf of his friend, though with the same want of success.

Several hours passed away, the wind gradually getting to be heavier, and the sea rising, until the motion of the cutter compelled Mabel and the Quarter-Master to retreat, also. Cap wore several times ; and it was now evident that the Scud was drifting into the broader and deeper parts of the lake, the seas raging down upon her in a way that none but a vessel of superior mould and build could have long ridden, and withstood. All this, however, gave Cap no uneasiness ; but like the hunter that pricks his ears at the sound of the horn, or the war-horse that paws and snorts with pleasure at the roll of the drum, the whole scene awakened all that was man within him ; and instead of the captious, supercilious, and dogmatic critic, quarrelling with trifles, and exaggerating immaterial things, he began to exhibit the qualities of the hardy and experienced seaman, that he truly was. The hands soon imbibed a respect for his skill ; and, though they wondered at the disappearance of their old commander, and the pilot, for which no reason had been publicly given, they soon yielded an implicit and cheerful obedience to the new one.

"This bit of fresh-water, after all, brother Dunham, has some spirit, I find," cried Cap, about noon, rubbing his hands in pure satisfaction at finding himself once more wrestling with the elements. "The wind seems to be an honest old-fashioned gale, and the seas have a fanciful resemblance to those of the gulf stream. I like this, serjeant, I like this ; and shall get to respect your lake, if it hold out twenty-four hours longer in the fashion in which it has begun."

"Land, ho !" shouted the man who was stationed on the fore-castle.

Cap hurried forward ; and there, sure enough, the land was visible through the drizzle, at the distance of about half a mile,—the cutter heading directly towards it. The first impulse of the old seaman was to give an order to "stand

by, to w~~ar~~e off shore ;” but the cool-headed soldier restrained him.

“ By going a little nearer,” said the serjeant, “ some of us may recognize the place. Most of us know the American shore, in this part of the lake ; and it will be something gained to learn our position.”

“ Very true—very true ; if, indeed, there is any chance of that, we will hold on. What is this off here, a little on our weather bow ? It looks like a low headland.”

“ The garrison, by Jove !” exclaimed the other, whose trained eye sooner recognized the military outlines than the less instructed senses of his connection.

The serjeant was not mistaken. There was the fort, sure enough, though it looked dim and indistinct through the fine rain, as if it were seen in the dusk of evening, or the haze of morning. The low, sodded, and verdant ramparts, the sombre palisades, now darker than ever with water, the roof of a house or two, the tall, solitary flag-staff, with its hal-yards blown steadily out, into a curve that appeared traced in immovable lines in the air, were all soon to be seen, though no sign of animated life could be discovered. Even the sentinel was housed ; and, at first, it was believed that no eye would detect the presence of their own vessel. But the unceasing vigilance of a border garrison did not slumber. One of the look-outs probably made the interesting discovery ; a man or two were seen on some elevated stands, and then the entire ramparts, next the lake, were dotted with human beings.

The whole scene was one in which sublimity was singularly relieved by the picturesque. The raging of the tempest had a character of duration, that rendered it easy to imagine it might be a permanent feature of the spot. The roar of the wind was without intermission, and the raging water answered to its dull but grand strains, with hissing spray, a menacing wash, and sullen surges. The drizzle made a medium for the eye which closely resembled that of a thin mist, softening and rendering mysterious the images it revealed, while the genial feeling that is apt to accompany a gale of wind on water, contributed to aid the milder influences of the moment. The dark, interminable forest hove up out of the obscurity, grand, sombre and impressive, while

the solitary, peculiar and picturesque glimpses of life that were caught in and about the fort, formed a refuge for the eye to retreat to, when oppressed with the more imposing objects of nature.

"They see us," said the serjeant, "and think we have returned on account of the gale, and have fallen to leeward of the port. Yes, there is Major Duncan himself, on the north-eastern bastion; I know him by his height, and by the officers around him!"

"Serjeant, it would be worth standing a little jeering, if we could fetch into the river, and come safely to an anchor! In that case, too, we might land this Master Eau-douce, and purify the boat."

"It would indeed; but as poor a sailor as I am, I well know it cannot be done. Nothing that sails the lake can turn to windward against this gale; and there is no anchorage outside, in weather like this."

"I know it—I see it—serjeant, and pleasant as is that sight to you landsmen, we must leave it. For myself, I am never as happy, in heavy weather, as when I am certain that the land is behind me."

The Scud had now forged so near in, that it became indispensable to lay her head off shore, again, and the necessary orders were given. The storm-staysail was set forward, the gaff lowered, the helm put up, and the light craft, that seemed to sport with the elements like a duck, fell off a little, drew ahead swiftly, obeyed her rudder, and was soon flying away on the top of the surges, dead before the gale. While making this rapid flight, though the land still remained in view, on her larboard beam, the fort, and the groups of anxious spectators on its rampart, were swallowed up in the mist. Then followed the evolutions necessary to bring the head of the cutter up to the wind, when she again began to wallow her weary way towards the north shore.

Hours now passed, before any further change was made, the wind increasing in force, until even the dogmatical Cap fairly admitted it was blowing a thorough gale of wind. About sunset the Scud wore again, to keep her off the north shore, during the hours of darkness; and at midnight her temporary master, who, by questioning the crew in an indirect manner, had obtained some general knowledge of the size and shape

of the lake, believed himself to be about midway between the two shores. The height and length of the seas, aided this impression; and it must be added that Cap, by this time, began to feel a respect for fresh-water, that twenty-four hours earlier, he would have derided as impossible. Just as the night turned, the fury of the wind became so great, that he found it impossible to bear up against it, the water falling on the deck of the little craft in such masses as to cause it to shake to the centre, and, though a vessel of singularly lively qualities, to threaten to bury it beneath its weight. The people of the Scud averred that never before had they been out in such a tempest; which was true; for, possessing a perfect knowledge of all the rivers and head-lands and havens, Jasper would have carried the cutter in shore, long ere this, and placed her in safety, in some secure anchorage. But, Cap still disdained to consult the young master, who continued below, determining to act like a mariner of the broad ocean.

It was one in the morning, when the storm-staysail was again got on the Scud, the head of the mainsail lowered, and the cutter put before the wind. Although the canvass now exposed was merely a rag in surface, the little craft nobly justified the use of the name she bore. For eight hours did she scud, in truth; and it was almost with the velocity of the gulls that wheeled wildly over her in the tempest, apparently afraid to alight in the boiling caldron of the lake. The dawn of day brought little change; for no other horizon became visible, than the little circle of drizzling sky and water, already described, in which it seemed as if the elements were rioting in a sort of chaotic confusion. During this time the crew and passengers of the cutter were of necessity passive. Jasper and the pilot remained below; but, the motion of the vessel having become easier, nearly all the rest were on deck. The morning meal had been taken in silence, and eye met eye, as if their owners asked each other, in dumb show, what was to be the end of this strife in the elements. Cap, however, was perfectly composed, and his face brightened, his step grew firmer, and his whole air more assured, as the storm increased, making larger demands on his professional skill, and personal spirit. He stood on the forecastle, his arms crossed, balancing his body with a seaman's instinct,

while his eyes watched the caps of the seas, as they broke and glanced past the reeling cutter, itself in such swift motion, as if they were the scud flying athwart the sky. At this sublime instant one of the hands gave the unexpected cry of "a sail!"

There was so much of the wild and solitary character of the wilderness about Ontario, that one scarcely expected to meet with a vessel on its waters. The Scud, herself, to those who were in her, resembled a man threading the forest alone, and the meeting was like that of two solitary hunters beneath the broad canopy of leaves that then covered so many millions of acres on the continent of America. The peculiar state of the weather served to increase the romantic, almost supernatural appearance of the passage. Cap alone regarded it with practised eyes, and even he felt his iron nerves thrill under the sensations that were awakened by the wild features of the scene.

The strange vessel was about two cables' length ahead of the Scud, standing by the wind athwart her bows, and steering a course to render it probable that the latter would pass within a few yards of her. She was a full-rigged ship, and seen through the misty medium of the tempest, the most experienced eye could detect no imperfection in her gear or construction. The only canvass she had set, was a close-reefed main-top-sail, and two small storm-staysails, one forward and the other aft. Still the power of the wind pressed so hard upon her as to bear her down nearly to her beam-ends, whenever the hull was not righted by the buoyancy of some wave under her lee. Her spars were all in their places, and by her motion through the water, which might have equalled four knots in the hour, it was apparent that she steered a little free.

"The fellow must know his position well," said Cap, as the cutter flew down towards the ship, with a velocity almost equalling that of the gale, "for he is standing boldly to the southward, where he expects to find anchorage or a haven. No man in his senses would run off free in that fashion, that was not driven to scudding, like ourselves, who did not perfectly understand where he was going."

"We have made an awful run, captain," returned the man to whom this remark had been addressed. "That is the

French king's ship, Lee-my-calm, (le Montcalm,) and she is standing in for the Niagara, where her owner has a garrison and a port. We've have made an awful run of it!"

"Ay, bad luck to him! Frenchman like, he skulks into port the moment he sees an English bottom."

"It might be well for us, if we could follow him," returned the man shaking his head despondingly, "for we are getting into the end of a bay up here at the head of the lake, and it is uncertain whether we ever get out of it again!"

"Poh! man, poh!—We have plenty of sea room, and a good English hull beneath us. We are no Johnny Crapauds to hide ourselves behind a point or a fort, on account of a puff of wind. Mind your helm, sir!"

The order was given on account of the menacing appearance of the approaching passage. The Scud was now heading directly for the fore-foot of the Frenchman; and, the distance between the two vessels having diminished to a hundred yards, it was momentarily questionable if there was room to pass.

"Port, sir—port!" shouted Cap. "Port your helm and pass astern!"

The crew of the Frenchman were seen assembling to windward, and a few muskets were pointed, as if to order the people of the Scud to keep off. Gesticulations were observed, but the sea was too wild and menacing to admit of the ordinary expedients of war. The water was dripping from the muzzles of two or three light guns on board the ship, but no one thought of loosening them for service in such a tempest. Her black sides, as they emerged from a wave, glistened and seemed to frown, but the wind howled through her rigging, whistling the thousand notes of a ship; and the hails and cries that escape a Frenchman with so much readiness, were inaudible.

"Let him hollow himself hoarse!" growled Cap. "This is no weather to whisper secrets in. Port, sir, port!"

The man at the helm obeyed, and the next send of the sea drove the Scud down upon the quarter of the ship, so near her that the old mariner, himself, recoiled a step, in a vague expectation that, at the next surge ahead, she would drive bows foremost directly into the planks of the other vessel. But this was not to be. Rising from the crouching posture she

had taken, like a panther about to leap, the cutter dashed onward, and, at the next instant, she was glancing past the stern of her enemy, just clearing the end of her spanker-boom with her own lower yard.

The young Frenchman, who commanded the Montcalm, leaped on the taffrail, and with that high-toned courtesy which relieves even the worst acts of his countrymen, he raised his cap and smiled a salutation as the Scud shot past. There were *bonhomie* and good taste in this act of courtesy, when circumstances allowed of no other communications; but they were lost on Cap, who, with an instinct quite as true to his race, shook his fist menacingly, and muttered to himself—

“Ay—ay—it’s d—d lucky for you I’ve no armament on board here, or I’d send you in to get new cabin-windows fitted. Serjeant, he’s a humbug.”

“’T was civil, brother Cap,” returned the other, lowering his hand from the military salute which his pride as a soldier had induced him to return—“’t was civil, and that’s as much as you can expect from a Frenchman. What he really meant by it, no one can say.”

“He is not heading up to this sea without an object, neither! Well, let him run in, if he can get there; we will keep the lake, like hearty English mariners.”

This sounded gloriously, but Cap eyed with envy, the glittering black mass of the Montcalm’s hull, her waving top-sail, and the misty tracery of her spars, as she grew less and less distinct, and finally disappeared in the drizzle, in a form as shadowy as that of some unreal image. Gladly would he have followed in her wake, had he dared; for to own the truth, the prospect of another stormy night in the midst of the wild waters that were raging around him, brought little consolation. Still he had too much professional pride to betray his uncasiness, and those under his care relied on his knowledge and resources, with the implicit and blind confidence that the ignorant are apt to feel.

A few hours succeeded, and darkness came again to increase the perils of the Scud. A lull in the gale, however, had induced Cap to come by the wind once more, and throughout the night, the cutter was lying-to, as before, head-reaching as a matter of course, and occasionally waring to keep off the land. It is unnecessary to dwell on the inci-

dents of this night, which resembled those of any other gale of wind. There were the pitching of the vessel, the hissing of the waters, the dashing of spray, the shocks that menaced annihilation to the little craft as she plunged into the seas, the undying howling of the wind, and the fearful drift. The last was the most serious danger; for, though exceedingly weatherly under her canvass, and totally without top-hamper, the Scud was so light, that the combing of the swells would seem, at times, to wash her down to leeward, with a velocity as great as that of the surges themselves.

During this night, Cap slept soundly and for several hours. The day was just dawning, when he felt himself shaken by the shoulder, and arousing himself, he found the Pathfinder standing at his side. During the gale, the guide had appeared little on deck, for his natural modesty told him that seamen alone should interfere with the management of the vessel; and he was willing to show the same reliance on those who had charge of the Scud, as he expected those who followed through the forest to manifest in his own skill. But he now thought himself justified in interfering, which he did in his own unsophisticated and peculiar manner.

"Sleep is sweet, Master Cap," he said, as soon as the eyes of the latter were fairly open, and his consciousness had sufficiently returned—"Sleep is sweet, as I know from experience, but life is sweeter still. Look about you, and say if this is exactly the moment for a commander to be off his feet."

"How now—how now—Master Pathfinder!" growled Cap, in the first moments of his awakened faculties—"Are you, too, getting on the side of the grumblers? When ashore, I admired your sagacity in running through the worst shoals, without a compass, and since we have been afloat, your meekness and submission have been as pleasant, as your confidence on your own ground; I little expected such a summons from you."

"As for myself, Master Cap, I feel I have my gifts, and I believe they'll interfere with those of no other man; but the case may be different with Mabel Dunham. She has her gifts, too, it is true; but they are not rude like ours, but gentle, and womanish, as they ought to be. It's on her account that I speak, and not on my own."

"Ay—ay—I begin to understand. The girl is a good

girl, my worthy friend, but she is a soldier's daughter and a sailor's niece, and ought not to be too tame, or too tender, in a gale. Does she show any fear?"

"Not she—not she. Mabel is a woman, but she is reasonable and silent. Not a word have I heard from her, concerning our doings; though I do think, Master Cap, she would like it better, if Jasper Eau-douce were put into his proper place, and things were restored to their old situation, like. This is human natur'."

"I'll warrant it!—Girl-like, and Dunham-like, too. Anything is better than an old uncle, and everybody knows more than an old seaman! *This* is human natur', Master Pathfinder, and d——e, if I'm the man to sheer a fathom, star-board or port, for all the human natur' that can be found in a minx of twenty—ay,—or"—lowering his voice a little—"for all that can be paraded in his majesty's 55th regiment of foot. I've not been at sea forty years, to come up on this bit of fresh-water to be taught human natur'.—How this gale holds out! It blows as hard, at this moment, as if Boreas had just clapped his hand upon the bellows. And what is all this to leeward?" rubbing his eyes—"land, as sure as my name is Cap;—and high land, too!"

The Pathfinder made no immediate answer, but shaking his head, he watched the expression of his companion's face, with a look of strong anxiety, in his own.

"Land, as certain as this is the Scud!"—repeated Cap—"a lee shore, and that, too, within a league of us, with as pretty a line of breakers as one could find on the beach of all Long Island!"

"And is that encouraging, or is it disheartening?" demanded the Pathfinder.

"Ha! encouraging, disheartening?—Why, neither. No, no—there is nothing encouraging about it; and, as for disheartening, nothing ought to dishearten a seaman. You never get disheartened or afraid in the woods, my friend."

"I'll not say that—I'll not say that. When the danger is great, it is my gift to see it, and know it, and to try to avoid it; else would my scalp, long since, have been drying in a Mingo wigwam. On this lake, however, I can see no trail, and I feel it my duty to submit; though I think we ought to remember there is such a person as Mabel Dunham

on board. But here comes her father, and he will naturally feel for his own child."

"We are seriously situated, I believe, brother Cap," said the serjeant, when he had reached the spot, "by what I can gather from the two hands on the forecastle. They tell me the cutter cannot carry any more sail, and her drift is so great we shall go ashore in an hour or two. I hope their fears have deceived them?"

Cap made no reply, but he gazed at the land with a rueful face, and then looked to windward, with an expression of ferocity, as if he would gladly have quarrelled with the weather.

"It may be well, brother," the serjeant continued, "to send for Jasper and consult him as to what is to be done. There are no French here to dread, and, under all circumstances, the boy will save us from drowning if possible."

"Ay—ay—'t is these cursed circumstances that have done all the mischief! But let the fellow come; let him come; a few well-managed questions will bring the truth out of him, I'll warrant you."

This acquiescence on the part of the dogmatical Cap was no sooner obtained, than Jasper was sent for. The young man instantly made his appearance, his whole air, countenance and mien, expressive of mortification, humility, and, as his observers fancied, rebuked deception. When he first stepped on deck, Jasper cast one hurried anxious glance around, as if curious to know the situation of the cutter; and that glance sufficed, it would seem, to let him into the secret of all her perils. At first he looked to windward, as is usual with every seaman; then he turned round the horizon, until his eye caught a view of the highlands to leeward, when the whole truth burst upon him at once.

"I've sent for you, Master Jasper," said Cap, folding his arms, and balancing his body with the dignity of the forecastle, "in order to learn something about the haven to leeward. We take it for granted, you do not bear malice so hard, as to wish to drown us all, especially the women; and I suppose you will be man enough to help us to run the cutter into some safe berth, until this bit of a gale has done blowing?"

"I would die myself, rather than harm should come to Mabel Dunham," the young man earnestly answered.

"I knew it!—I knew it!" cried the Pathfinder, clapping

his hand kindly on Jasper's shoulder. "The lad is as true as the best compass that ever run a boundary, or brought a man off from a blind trail! It is a moral sin to believe otherwise."

"Humph!" ejaculated Cap, "especially the women!—As if *they* were in any particular danger. Never mind, young man; we shall understand each other by talking like two plain seamen. Do you know of any port under our lee?"

"None. There is a large bay at this end of the lake, but it is unknown to us all; and not easy of entrance."

"And this coast to leeward—it has nothing particular to recommend it, I suppose?"

"It is a wilderness until you reach the mouth of the Niagara, in one direction, and Frontenac in the other. North and west, they tell me, there is nothing but forest and prairies, for a thousand miles."

"Thank God, then, there can be no French. Are there many savages, hereaway, on the land?"

"The Indians are to be found in all directions; though they are nowhere very numerous. By accident, we might find a party at any point on the shore; or, we might pass months there, without seeing one."

"We must take our chance, then, as to the blackguards—but, to be frank with you, Master Western—if this little unpleasant matter about the French had not come to pass, what would you now do with the cutter?"

"I am a much younger sailor than yourself, Master Cap," said Jasper, modestly, "and am hardly fitted to advise you."

"Ay—ay—we all know that. In a common case, perhaps not. But this is an uncommon case, and a circumstance; and on this bit of fresh-water, it has what may be called, its peculiarities; and so, every thing considered, you may be fitted to advise even your own father. At all events, you can speak, and I can judge of your opinions, agreeably to my own experience."

"I think, sir, before two hours are over, the cutter will have to anchor."

"Anchor!—not out here, in the lake?"

"No, sir; but in yonder, near the land."

"You do not mean to say, Master Eau-deuce, you would anchor on a lee shore, in a gale of wind!"

"If I would save my vessel, that is exactly what I would do, Master Cap."

"Whe—e—e—w!—this is fresh-water, with a vengeance. Harkee, young man, I've been a seafaring animal, boy and man, forty-one years, and I never yet heard of such a thing. I'd throw my ground-tackle overboard, before I would be guilty of so lubberly an act!"

"That is what we do, on this lake," modestly replied Jasper, "when we are hard pressed. I dare say, we might do better, had we been better taught."

"That you might indeed! No; no man induces me to commit such a sin against my own bringing up. I should never dare show my face inside of Sandy Hook again, had I committed so know-nothing an exploit. Why, Pathfinder, here, has more seamanship in him than that comes to. You can go below, again, Master Eau-deuce."

Jasper quietly bowed and withdrew; still, as he passed down the ladder, the spectators observed that he cast a lingering, anxious look at the horizon to windward, and the land to leeward, and then disappeared with concern strongly expressed in every lineament of his face.

CHAPTER II.

"His still refuted quirks he still repeats;
New raised objections with new quibbles meets,
Till sinking in the quicksand he defends,
He dies disputing, and the contest ends."

COWPER.

As the soldier's wife was sick in her berth, Mabel Dunham was the only person in the outer cabin, when Jasper returned to it; for, by an act of grace in the serjeant, he had been permitted to resume his proper place, in this part of the vessel. We should be ascribing too much simplicity of character to our heroine, if we said that she had felt no distrust

of the young man, in consequence of his arrest; but we should also be doing injustice to her warmth of feeling, and generosity of disposition, if we did not add, that this distrust was insignificant and transient. As he now took his seat near her, his whole countenance clouded with the uneasiness he felt concerning the situation of the cutter, everything like suspicion was banished from her mind, and she saw in him only an injured man.

"You let this affair weigh too heavily on your mind, Jasper," she said, eagerly, or with that forgetfulness of self, with which the youthful of her sex are wont to betray their feelings, when a strong and generous interest has attained the ascendancy—"no one, who knows you, can, or does, believe you guilty. Pathfinder says he will pledge his life for you."

"Then you, Mabel," returned the youth, his eyes flashing fire, "do not look upon me, as the traitor that your father seems to believe me to be?"

"My dear father is a soldier, and is obliged to act as one. My father's daughter is not, and will think of you, as she ought to think of a man who has done so much to serve her already."

"Mabel—I'm not used to talking with one like you—or, saying all I think and feel with any. I never had a sister, and my mother died when I was a child, so that I know little what your sex most likes to hear—"

Mabel would have given the world to know what lay behind the teeming word, at which Jasper hesitated; but the indefinable and controlling sense of womanly diffidence made her suppress her womanly curiosity. She waited in silence for him to explain his own meaning.

"I wish to say, Mabel," the young man continued, after a pause which he found sufficiently embarrassing, "that I am unused to the ways and opinions of one like you, and that you must imagine all I would add."

Mabel had imagination enough to fancy anything, but there are ideas and feelings that her sex prefer to have expressed, before they yield them all their own sympathies, and she had a vague consciousness that these of Jasper's might properly be enumerated in the class; with a readiness that belonged to her sex, therefore, she preferred changing

the discourse to permitting it to proceed any further, in a manner so awkward and so unsatisfactory.

"Tell me one thing, Jasper, and I shall be content," she said, speaking now with a firmness that denoted confidence not only in herself, but in her companion—"you do not deserve this cruel suspicion which rests upon you?"

"I do not, Mabel," answered Jasper, looking into her full blue eyes, with an openness and simplicity that might have shaken strong distrust. "As I hope for mercy, hereafter, I do not."

"I knew it—I could have sworn it," returned the girl, warmly. "And yet my father means well: but do not let this matter disturb you, Jasper."

"There is so much more to apprehend from another quarter, just now, that I scarce think of it."

"Jasper!"

"I do not wish to alarm you, Mabel, but if your uncle could be persuaded to change his notions about handling the Scud—and yet, he is so much older, and more experienced than I am, that he ought, perhaps, to place more reliance on his own judgment than on mine."

"Do you think the cutter in any danger?" demanded Mabel, quick as thought.

"I fear so—at least she would have been thought in great danger, by us of the lake; perhaps an old seaman of the ocean may have means of his own to take care of her."

"Jasper, all agree in giving you credit for skill in managing the Scud! You know the lake, you know the cutter—you *must* be the best judge of our real situation!"

"My concern for you, Mabel, may make me more cowardly than common; but, to be frank, I see but one method of keeping the cutter from being wrecked in the course of the next two or three hours, and that your uncle refuses to take. After all, this may be my ignorance; for, as he says, Ontario is merely fresh-water."

"You cannot believe this will make any difference. Think of my dear father, Jasper!—Think of yourself, of all the lives that depend on a timely word from you to save them!"

"I think of you, Mabel, and that is more, much more, than all the rest put together," returned the young man, with

a strength of expression and an earnestness of look, that uttered infinitely more than the words themselves.

Mabel's heart beat quick, and a gleam of grateful satisfaction shot across her blushing features; but the alarm was too vivid and too serious to admit of much relief from happier thoughts. She did not attempt to repress a look of gratitude, and then she returned to the feeling that was naturally uppermost.

"My uncle's obstinacy must not be permitted to occasion this disaster. Go once more on deck, Jasper, and ask my father to come into the cabin."

While the young man was complying with this request, Mabel sat listening to the howling of the storm, and the dashing of the water against the cutter, in a dread to which she had hitherto been a stranger. Constitutionally an excellent sailor, as the term is used among passengers, she had not, hitherto, bethought her of any danger, and had passed her time, since the commencement of the gale, in such womanly employments, as her situation allowed; but now alarm was seriously awakened, she did not fail to perceive, that never before had she been on the water in such a tempest. The minute or two that elapsed ere the serjeant came appeared an hour, and she scarcely breathed when she saw him and Jasper descending the ladder in company. Quick as language could express her meaning, she acquainted her father with Jasper's opinion of their situation, and entreated him, if he loved her, or had any regard for his own life, or for those of his men, to interfere with her uncle, and to induce him to yield the control of the cutter, again, to its proper commander.

"Jasper is true, father," she added earnestly, "and if false, he could have no motive in wrecking us in this distant part of the lake, at the risk of all our lives, his own included. I will pledge my own life for his truth."

"Ay, this is well enough for a young woman who is frightened," answered the more phlegmatic parent; "but it might not be so prudent, or excusable in one in command of an expedition. Jasper may think the chance of drowning in getting ashore, fully repaid by the chance of escaping as soon as he reaches the land."

"Serjeant Dunham!"

"Father!"

These exclamations were made simultaneously, but they were uttered in tones expressive of different feelings. In Jasper, surprise was the emotion uppermost; in Mabel, reproach. The old soldier, however, was too much accustomed to deal frankly with subordinates to heed either; and, after a moment's thought, he continued, as if neither had spoken.

"Nor is brother Cap a man likely to submit to be taught his duty on board a vessel."

"But, father, when all our lives are in the utmost jeopardy!"

"So much the worse. The fair-weather commander is no great matter; it is when things go wrong, that the best officer shows himself in his true colours. Charles Cap will not be likely to quit the helm because the ship is in danger. Besides, Jasper Eau-douce, he says, your proposal, in itself, has a suspicious air about it, and sounds more like treachery than reason."

"He may think so, but let him send for the pilot, and hear his opinion. It is well known, I have not seen the man since yesterday evening."

"This does sound reasonably, and the experiment shall be tried. Follow me on deck, then, that all may be honest and above-board."

Jasper obeyed, and so keen was the interest of Mabel, that she, too, ventured as far as the companion-way, where her garments were sufficiently protected against the violence of the wind, and her person from the spray. Here maiden modesty induced her to remain, though an absorbed witness of what was passing.

The pilot soon appeared, and there was no mistaking the look of concern that he cast around at the scene, as soon as he was in the open air. Some rumours of the situation of the Scud had found their way below, it is true; but, in this instance, rumour had lessened, instead of magnifying the danger. He was allowed a few minutes to look about him, and then the question was put as to the course that he thought it prudent to follow.

"I see no means of saving the cutter but to anchor," he answered simply, and without hesitation.

"What, out here, in the lake?" inquired Cap, as he had previously done of Jasper.

"No—but closer in; just at the outer line of the breakers."

The effect of this communication was to leave no doubt, in the mind of Cap, that there was a secret arrangement, between her commander and the pilot, to cast away the Scud; most probably with the hope of effecting their escape. He consequently treated the opinion of the latter with the indifference he had manifested towards that of the former.

"I tell you, brother Dunham," he said, in answer to the remonstrances of the serjeant against his turning a deaf ear to this double representation, "that no seaman would give such an opinion honestly. To anchor on a lee shore, in a gale of wind, would be an act of madness that I could never excuse to the underwriters, under any circumstances, as long as a rag can be set—but to anchor close to breakers would be insanity."

"His majesty underwrites the Scud, brother, and I am responsible for the lives of my command. These men are better acquainted with Lake Ontario than we can possibly be, and I do think their telling the same tale entitles them to some credit."

"Uncle!" said Mabel, earnestly,—but a gesture from Jasper induced the girl to restrain her feelings.

"We are drifting down upon the breakers so rapidly," said the young man, "that little need be said on the subject. Half an hour must settle the matter, one way or the other; but I warn Master Cap that the surest-footed man among us will not be able to keep his feet an instant on the deck of this low craft, should she fairly get within them. Indeed, I make little doubt that we shall fill and founder before the second line of rollers is passed!"

"And how would anchoring help the matter?" demanded Cap, furiously, as if he felt that Jasper was responsible for the effects of the gale, as well as for the opinion he had just given.

"It would at least do no harm," Eau-douce mildly replied. "By bringing the cutter head to sea we should lessen her drift; and even if we dragged through the breakers, it would be with the least possible danger. I hope, Master Cap, you

will allow the pilot and myself to *prepare* for anchoring, since the precaution may do good, and can do no harm."

"Overhaul your ranges if you will, and get your anchors clear, with all my heart. We are now in a situation that cannot be much affected by anything of that sort. Serjeant, a word with you, aft here, if you please."

Cap led his brother-in-law out of ear-shot; and then, with more of human feeling in his voice and manner than he was apt to exhibit, he opened his heart on the subject of their real situation.

"This is a melancholy affair for poor Mabel," he said, blowing his nose, and speaking with a slight tremour—"You and I, serjeant, are old fellows, and used to being near death, if not to actually dying. Our trades fit us for such scenes; but poor Mabel, she is an affectionate and kind-hearted girl, and I had hoped to see her comfortably settled and a mother, before my time came. Well, well; we must take the bad with the good, in every v'y'ge, and the only serious objection that an old sea-faring man can with propriety make to such an event, is that it should happen on this bit of d——d fresh-water."

Serjeant Dunham was a brave man, and had shown his spirit in scenes that looked much more appalling than this. But, on all such occasions, he had been able to act his part against his foes, while here he was pressed upon by an enemy whom he had no means of resisting. For himself, he cared far less, than for his daughter; feeling some of that self-reliance which seldom deserts a man of firmness, who is in vigorous health, and who has been accustomed to personal exertions, in moments of jeopardy. But, as respects Mabel, he saw no means of escape, and with a father's fondness he at once determined that, if either was doomed to perish, he and his daughter must perish together.

"Do you think this must come to pass?" he asked of Cap, firmly, but with strong feeling.

"Twenty minutes will carry us into the breakers, and, look for yourself, serjeant, what chance will even the stoutest man among us have in that caldron to leeward!"

The prospect was, indeed, little calculated to encourage hope. By this time the Scud was within a mile of the shore, on which the gale was blowing at right angles, with a vio

lence that forbade the idea of showing any additional canvass, with a view to claw off. The small portion of the mainsail that was actually set, and which merely served to keep the head of the Scud so near the wind as to prevent the waves from breaking over her, quivered under the gusts, as if, at each moment, the stout threads which held the complicated fabric together, were about to be torn asunder. The drizzle had ceased; but the air, for a hundred feet above the surface of the lake, was filled with dazzling spray, which had an appearance not unlike that of a brilliant mist, while above all, the sun was shining gloriously, in a cloudless sky. Jasper had noted the omen; and had foretold that it announced a speedy termination to the gale, though the next hour or two must decide their fate. Between the cutter and the shore, the view was still more wild and appalling. The breakers extended near a half a mile; while the water within their line was white with foam, the air above them was so far filled with vapour and spray, as to render the land beyond hazy and indistinct. Still it could be seen that the latter was high; not a usual thing for the shores of Ontario; and that it was covered with the verdant mantle of the interminable forest.

While the serjeant and Cap were gazing at this scene, in silence, Jasper and his people were actively engaged on the forecastle. No sooner had the young man received permission to resume his old employment, than appealing to some of the soldiers for aid, he mustered five or six assistants, and set about in earnest, the performance of a duty that had been too long delayed. On these narrow waters, anchors are never stowed in-board, or cables that are intended for service unbent, and Jasper was saved much of the labour that would have been necessary in a vessel at sea. The two bowers were soon ready to be let go, ranges of the cables were overhauled, and then the party paused to look about them. No changes for the better had occurred; but the cutter was falling slowly in, and each instant rendered it more certain that she could not gain an inch to windward.

One long, earnest survey of the lake ended, Jasper gave new orders in a manner to prove how much he thought that the time pressed. Two kedges were got on deck, and hawsers were bent to them; the inner ends of the hawsers were bent, in their turns, to the crowns of the anchors, and

everything was got ready to throw them overboard, at the proper moment. These preparations completed, Jasper's manner changed from the excitement of exertion, to a look of calm, but settled, concern. He quitted the forecandle, where the seas were dashing inboard, at every plunge of the vessel; the duty just mentioned having been executed with the bodies of the crew frequently buried in the water, and walked to a drier part of the deck, aft. Here he was met by the Pathfinder, who was standing near Mabel and the Quarter-Master. Most of those on board, with the exception of the individuals who have already been particularly mentioned, were below, some seeking relief from physical suffering on their pallets; and others tardily bethinking them of their sins. For the first time, most probably, since her keel had dipped into the limpid waters of Ontario, the voice of prayer was heard on board the Scud.

"Jasper," commenced his friend, the guide, "I have been of no use this morning, for my gifts are of little account, as you know, in a vessel like this; but, should it please God to let the serjeant's daughter reach the shore, alive, my acquaintance with the forest may still carry her through in safety to the garrison."

"'Tis a fearful distance thither, Pathfinder!" Mabel rejoined, the party being so near together that all that was said by one, was overheard by the others. "I am afraid none of us could live to reach the fort."

"It would be a risky path, Mabel, and a crooked one; though some of your sex have undergone even more than that, in this wilderness. But, Jasper, either you or I, or both of us, must man this bark canoe; Mabel's only chance will lie in getting through the breakers in that."

"I would willingly man any thing to save Mabel," answered Jasper, with a melancholy smile; "but no human hand, Pathfinder, could carry that canoe through yonder breakers, in a gale like this. I have hopes from anchoring, after all; for, once before, have we saved the Scud in an extremity nearly as great as this."

"If we are to anchor, Jasper," the serjeant inquired, "why not do it at once? Every foot we lose in drifting now, would come into the distance we shall probably drag, when the anchors are let go."

Jasper drew nearer to the serjeant, and took his hand, pressing it earnestly, and in a way to denote strong, almost uncontrollable feelings.

"Serjeant Dunham," he said, solemnly, "you are a good man, though you have treated me harshly in this business. You love your daughter?"

"That you cannot doubt, Eau-douce," returned the serjeant, huskily.

"Will you give her — give us all, the only chance for life, that is left?"

"What would you have me do, boy; what would you have me do? I have acted according to my judgment, hitherto — what would you have me do?"

"Support me against Master Cap, for five minutes, and all that man can do, towards saving the Scud, shall be done."

The serjeant hesitated, for he was too much of a disciplinarian to fly in the face of regular orders. He disliked the appearance of vacillation, too; and then he had a profound respect for his kinsman's seamanship. While he was deliberating, Cap came from the post he had some time occupied, which was at the side of the man at the helm, and drew nigh the group.

"Master Eau-deuce," he said, as soon as near enough to be heard, "I have come to inquire, if you know any spot near by, where this cutter can be beached? The moment has arrived when we are driven to this hard alternative?"

That instant of indecision on the part of Cap, secured the triumph of Jasper. Looking at the serjeant, the young man received a nod that assured him of all he asked, and he lost not one of those moments that were getting to be so very precious.

"Shall I take the helm?" he inquired of Cap, "and see if we can reach a creek that lies to leeward?"

"Do so—do so—" said the other, hemming to clear his throat, for he felt oppressed by a responsibility that weighed all the heavier on his shoulders, on account of his ignorance.

"Do so, Eau-deuce, since, to be frank with you, I can see nothing better to be done. We must beach, or swamp!"

Jasper required no more; springing aft, he soon had the tiller in his own hands. The pilot was prepared for what was to follow, and, at a sign from his young commander, the

rag of sail that had so long been set was taken in. At that moment, Jasper, watching his time, put the helm up, the head of a staysail was loosened forward, and the light cutter, as if conscious she was now under the control of familiar hands, fell off, and was soon in the trough of the sea. This perilous instant was passed in safety, and at the next moment, the little vessel appeared flying down toward the breakers, at a rate that threatened instant destruction. The distances had got to be so short, that five or six minutes sufficed for all that Jasper wished, and he put the helm down again, when the bows of the Scud came up to the wind, notwithstanding the turbulence of the waters, as gracefully as the duck varies its line of direction on the glassy pond. A sign from Jasper set all in motion on the forecastle, and a kedge was thrown from each bow. The fearful nature of the drift was now apparent even to Mabel's eyes, for the two hawsers ran out like tow-lines. As soon as they straightened to a slight strain, both anchors were let go, and cable was given to each, nearly to the better-ends. It was not a difficult task to snub so light a craft, with ground-tackle of a quality better than common; and in less than ten minutes from the moment when Jasper went to the helm, the Scud was riding, head to sea, with the two cables stretched ahead in lines that resembled bars of iron.

"This is not well done, Master Jasper!" angrily exclaimed Cap, as soon as he perceived the trick that had been played him—"this is not well done, sir; I order you to cut, and to beach the cutter, without a moment's delay."

No one, however, seemed disposed to comply with this order, for so long as Eau-douce saw fit to command, his own people were disposed to obey. Finding that the men remained passive, Cap, who believed they were in the utmost peril, turned fiercely to Jasper, and renewed his remonstrances.

"You did not head for your pretended creek," he added, after dealing in some objurgatory remarks that we do not deem it necessary to record, "but steered for that bluff, where every soul on board would have been drowned, had we gone ashore!"

"And you wish to cut, and put every soul ashore, at that very spot!" Jasper retorted, a little drily.

“Throw a lead-line overboard, and ascertain the drift—” Cap now roared to the people forward. A sign from Jasper, sustaining this order, it was instantly obeyed. All on deck gathered round the spot, and watched, with nearly breathless interest, the result of the experiment. The lead was no sooner on the bottom, than the line tended forward, and in about two minutes it was seen that the cutter had drifted her length, dead in towards the bluff. Jasper looked grave, for he well knew nothing would hold the vessel did she get within the vortex of the breakers, the first line of which was appearing and disappearing about a cable’s length directly under their stern.

“Traitor!” exclaimed Cap, shaking a finger at the young commander, though passion choked the rest. “You must answer for this with your life!” he added after a short pause, “If I were at the head of this expedition, serjeant, I would hang him at the end of the main-boom, lest he escape drowning.”

“Moderate your feelings, brother—be more moderate, I beseech you; Jasper appears to have done all for the best, and matters may not be as bad as you believe them.”

“Why did he not run for the creek, he mentioned—why has he brought us here, dead to windward of that bluff, and to a spot where even the breakers are only of half the ordinary width, as if in a hurry to drown all on board?”

“I headed for the bluff, for the precise reason that the breakers are so narrow at this spot,” answered Jasper, mildly, though his gorge had risen at the language the other held.

“Do you mean to tell an old seaman like me, that this cutter could live in those breakers?”

“I do not, sir. I think she would fill and swamp, if driven into the first line of them—I am certain she would never reach the shore on her bottom, if fairly entered. I hope to keep her clear of them, altogether.”

“With a drift of her length in a minute!”

“The backing of the anchors does not yet fairly tell, nor do I even hope that *they* will entirely bring her up.”

“On what then do you rely? To moor a craft, head and stern, by faith, hope, and charity!”

“No, sir—I trust to the under-tow. I headed for the bluff, because I knew that it was stronger at that point than at any

other, and because we could get nearer in with the land without entering the breakers."

This was said with spirit, though without any particular show of resentment. Its effect on Cap was marked, the feeling that was uppermost being evidently that of surprise.

"Under-tow!" he repeated—"who the devil ever heard of saving a vessel from going ashore by the under-tow!"

"This may never happen on the ocean, sir," Jasper answered, modestly, "but we have known it to happen here."

"The lad is right, brother," put in the serjeant; "for though I do not well understand it, I have often heard the sailors of the lake speak of such a thing. We shall do well to trust to Jasper, in this strait."

Cap grumbled and swore, but as there was no remedy, he was compelled to acquiesce. Jasper being now called on to explain what he meant by the under-tow, gave this account of the matter. The water that was driven up on the shore by the gale, was necessarily compelled to find its level by returning to the lake by some secret channels. This could not be done on the surface, where both wind and waves were constantly urging it towards the land, and it necessarily formed a sort of lower eddy, by means of which it flowed back again to its ancient and proper bed. This inferior current had received the name of the under-tow; and as it would necessarily act on the bottom of a vessel that drew as much water as the Scud, Jasper trusted to the aid of this reaction to keep his cables from parting. In short, the upper and lower currents would, in a manner, counteract each other.

Simple and ingenious as was this theory, however, as yet there was little evidence of its being reduced to practice. The drift continued; though as the kedges and hawsers with which the anchors were backed, took the strains, it became sensibly less. At length the man at the lead announced the joyful intelligence, that the anchors had ceased to drag, and that the vessel had brought up! At this precise moment, the first line of breakers was about a hundred feet astern of the Scud, even appearing to approach much nearer, as the foam vanished and returned on the raging surges. Jasper sprang forward, and casting a glance over the bows, he smiled in triumph, as he pointed exultingly to the cables. Instead of resembling bars of iron in rigidity, as before, they

were curving downwards, and to a seamen's senses, it was evident that the cutter rose and fell on the seas as they came in, with the ease of a ship in a tides-way, when the power of the wind is relieved by the counteracting pressure of the water.

"'T is the under-tow!" he exclaimed, with delight, fairly bounding along the deck to steady the helm, in order that the cutter might ride still easier—"Providence has placed us directly in its current, and there is no longer any danger!"

"Ay-ay, Providence is a good seaman"—growled Cap,—“and often helps lubbers out of difficulty. Under tow, or upper tow, the gale has abated, and fortunately for us all, the anchors have met with good holding-ground. Then this d——d fresh-water has an unnatural way with it.”

Men are seldom inclined to quarrel with good fortune, but it is in distress that they grow clamorous and critical. Most on board were disposed to believe that they had been saved from shipwreck by the skill and knowledge of Jasper, without regarding the opinions of Cap, whose remarks were now little heeded.

There was half an hour of uncertainty and doubt, it is true, during which period the lead was anxiously watched; and then a feeling of security came over all, and the weary slept without dreaming of instant death.

CHAPTER III.

“It is to be all made of sighs and tears;—
It is to be all made of faith and service:—
It is to be all made of fantasy,—
All made of passion, and all made of wishes :
All adoration, duty, and observance;
All humbleness, all patience, and impatience,
All purity, all trial, all observance.”

SHAKSPEARE.

It was near noon when the gale broke; and then its force abated as suddenly as its violence had arisen. In less than two hours after the wind fell, the surface of the lake, though still agitated, was no longer glittering with foam;

and in double that time, the entire sheet presented the ordinary scene of disturbed water, that was unbroken by the violence of a tempest. Still the waves came rolling incessantly towards the shore, and the lines of breakers remained, though the spray had ceased to fly: the combing of the swells was more moderate, and all that there was of violence proceeded from the impulsion of wind that had abated.

As it was impossible to make head against the sea that was still up, with the light opposing air that blew from the eastward, all thoughts of getting under way that afternoon were abandoned. Jasper, who had now quietly resumed the command of the Scud, busied himself, however, in heaving up to the anchors, which were lifted in succession. The kedges that backed them were weighed, and everything was got in readiness for a prompt departure, as soon as the state of the weather would allow. In the meantime, they who had no concern with these duties sought such means of amusement as their peculiar circumstances allowed.

As is common with those who are unused to the confinement of a vessel, Mabel cast wistful eyes towards the shore; nor was it long before she expressed a wish that it were possible to land. The Pathfinder was near her at the time, and he assured her that nothing would be easier, as they had a bark canoe on deck, which was the best possible mode of conveyance to go through a surf. After the usual doubts and misgivings, the serjeant was appealed to:—his opinion proved to be favourable, and preparations to carry the whim into effect were immediately made.

The party that was to land, consisted of Serjeant Dunham, his daughter and the Pathfinder. Accustomed to the canoe, Mabel took her seat in the centre with great steadiness, her father was placed in the bows, while the guide assumed the office of conductor, by steering in the stern. There was little need of impelling the canoe by means of the paddle, for the rollers sent it forward, at moments, with a violence that set every effort to govern its movements at defiance. More than once, ere the shore was reached, Mabel repented of her temerity, but Pathfinder encouraged her, and really manifested so much self-possession, coolness and strength of arm, himself, that even a female might have hesitated about owning all her apprehensions. Our heroine was no coward, and while she

felt the novelty of her situation, in landing through a surf, she also experienced a fair proportion of its wild delight. At moments, indeed, her heart was in her mouth, as the bubble of a boat floated on the very crest of a foaming breaker, appearing to skim the water like a swallow, and then she flushed and laughed, as, left by the glancing element, they appeared to linger behind, as if ashamed of having been out-done in the headlong race. A few minutes sufficed for this excitement, for, though the distance between the cutter and the land considerably exceeded a quarter of a mile, the intermediate space was passed in a very few minutes.

On landing, the serjeant kissed his daughter kindly, for he was so much of a soldier as always to feel more at home, on terra-firma, than when afloat, and taking his gun, he announced his intention to pass an hour, in quest of game.

"Pathfinder will remain near you, girl, and no doubt he will tell you some of the traditions of this part of the world, or some of his own experiences with the Mingos."

The guide laughed, promised to have a care of Mabel, and in a few minutes the father had ascended a steep acclivity, and disappeared in the forest. The others took another direction, which, after a few minutes of a sharp ascent also, brought them to a small naked point on the promontory, where the eye overlooked an extensive and very peculiar panorama. Here Mabel seated herself on a fragment of fallen rock, to recover her breath and strength, while her companion, on whose sinews no personal exertion seemed to make any impression, stood at her side, leaning in his own and not ungraceful manner on his long rifle. Several minutes passed, and neither spoke; Mabel, in particular, being lost in admiration of the view.

The position the two had obtained, was sufficiently elevated to command a wide reach of the lake, which stretched away towards the north-east, in a boundless sheet, glittering beneath the rays of an afternoon's sun, and yet betraying the remains of that agitation which it had endured while tossed by the late tempest. The land set bounds to its limits, in a huge crescent, disappearing in distance towards the south-east and the north. Far as the eye could reach, nothing but forest was visible, not even a solitary sign of civilization breaking in upon the uniform and grand magnificence of nature. The

gale had driven the Scud beyond the line of those forts, with which the French were then endeavouring to gird the English North American possessions; for, following the channels of communication between the great lakes, their posts were on the banks of the Niagara, while our adventurers had reached a point many leagues westward of that celebrated streight. The cutter rode at single anchor, without the breakers, resembling some well imagined and accurately executed toy, that was intended rather for a glass case, than for the struggles with the elements which she had so lately gone through, while the canoe lay on the narrow beach, just out of reach of the waves that came booming upon the land, a speck upon the shingles.

"We are very far, here, from human habitations!" exclaimed Mabel, when, after a long and musing survey of the scene, its principal peculiarities forced themselves on her active and ever brilliant imagination; "this is indeed being on a frontier!"

"Have they more sightly scenes than this, nearer the sea, and around their large towns?" demanded Pathfinder, with an interest he was apt to discover in such a subject.

"I will not say that; there is more to remind one of his fellow beings, there than here; less, perhaps, to remind one of God."

"Ay, Mabel, that is what my own feelings say. I am but a poor hunter, I know; untaught and unlearned; but God is as near me, in this my home, as he is near the king in his royal palace."

"Who can doubt it?"—returned Mabel, looking from the view up into the hard-featured but honest face of her companion, though not without surprise at the energy of his manner—"One feels nearer to God, in such a spot, I think, than when the mind is distracted by the objects of the towns."

"You say all I wish to say myself, Mabel, but in so much plainer speech, that you make me ashamed of wishing to let others know what I feel on such matters. I have coasted this lake, in search of skins, afore the war, and have been here already; not at this very spot, for we landed yonder where you may see the blasted oak that stands above the cluster of hemlocks—"

"How! Pathfinder, can you remember all these trifles so accurately!"

"These are our streets and houses; our churches and palaces. Remember them, indeed! I once made an appointment with the Big Serpent, to meet at twelve o'clock at noon, near the foot of a certain pine, at the end of six months, when neither of us was within three hundred miles of the spot. The tree stood, and stands still, unless the judgment of Providence has lighted on that too, in the midst of the forest, fifty miles from any settlement, but in a most extraordinary neighbourhood for beaver."

"And did you meet at that very spot and hour!"

"Does the sun rise and set? when I reached the tree, I found the Serpent leaning against its trunk, with torn leggings and muddied moccasins. The Delaware had got into a swamp, and it worried him not a little to find his way out of it; but, as the sun which comes over the eastern hills in the morning, goes down behind the western at night, so was he true to time and place. No fear of Chingachgook when there is either a friend or an enemy in the case. He is equally sartin with each."

"And where is the Delaware now—why is he not with us to-day?"

"He is scouting on the Mingo trail, where I ought to have been too, but for a great human infirmity."

"You seem above, beyond, superior, to all infirmity, Pathfinder; I never yet met with a man who appeared to be so little liable to the weaknesses of nature."

"If you mean in the way of health and strength, Mabel, Providence has been kind to me; though I fancy the open air, long hunts, active scoutings, forest fare, and the sleep of a good conscience, may always keep the doctors at a distance. But I am human, after all; yes, I find I'm very human, in some of my feelings."

Mabel looked surprised, and it would be no more than delineating the character of her sex, if we added that, her sweet countenance expressed a good deal of curiosity, too, though her tongue was more discreet.

"There is something bewitching in this wild life of yours, Pathfinder," she exclaimed, a tinge of enthusiasm mantling her cheeks. "I find I'm fast getting to be a frontier girl,

and am coming to love all this grand silence of the woods. The towns seem tame to me, and, as my father will probably pass the remainder of his days here, where he has already lived so long, I begin to feel that I should be happy to continue with him, and not to return to the sea shore."

"The woods are never silent, Mabel, to such as understand their meaning. Days at a time, have I travelled them alone, without feeling the want of company; and, as for conversation, for such as can comprehend their language, there is no want of rational and instructive discourse."

"I believe you are happier when alone, Pathfinder, than when mingling with your fellow-creatures."

"I will not say that—I will not say exactly that! I have seen the time when I have thought that God was sufficient for me in the forest, and that I craved no more than his bounty and his care. But other feelings have got uppermost, and I suppose nature will have its way.—All other creature's mate, Mabel, and it was intended man should do so, too."

"And have you never bethought you of seeking a wife, Pathfinder, to share your fortunes," enquired the girl, with the directness and simplicity that the pure of heart, and the undesigning, are the most apt to manifest, and with that feeling of affection which is inbred in her sex. "To me, it seems, you only want a home to return to, from your wanderings, to render your life completely happy. Were I a man, it would be my delight to roam through these forests at will, or to sail over this beautiful lake."

"I understand you, Mabel; and God bless you for thinking of the welfare of men as humble as we are. We have our pleasures, it is true, as well as our gifts, but we might be happier; yes, I do think we might be happier."

"Happier! in what way, Pathfinder? In this pure air, with these cool and shaded forests to wander through, this lovely lake to gaze at, and sail upon, with clear consciences, and abundance for all the real wants, men ought to be nothing less than as perfectly happy, as their infirmities will allow."

"Every creature has its gifts, Mabel, and men have theirs," answered the guide, looking stealthily at his beautiful companion, whose cheeks had flushed and eyes brightened under the ardour of feelings, excited by the novelty of her striking situation; "and all must obey them. Do you see yonder

pigeon that is just alightin' on the beach,—here in a line with the fallen chestnut?"

"Certainly; it is the only thing stirring with life in it, besides ourselves, that is to be seen in this vast solitude."

"Not so, Mabel, not so; Providence makes nothing that lives, to live quite alone.—Here is its mate, just rising on the wing; it has been feeding near the other beach, but it will not long be separated from its companion."

"I understand you, Pathfinder;" returned Mabel, smiling sweetly, though as calmly as if the discourse was with her father. "But a hunter may find a mate, even in this wild region. The Indian girls are affectionate and true, I know, for such was the wife of Arrowhead, to a husband who oftener frowned than smiled."

"That would never do, Mabel, and good would never come of it. Kind must cling to kind, and country to country, if one would find happiness. If, indeed, I could meet with one like you, who would consent to be a hunter's wife, and who would not scorn my ignorance and rudeness, then, indeed, would all the toil of the past appear like the sporting of the young deer, and all the future like sunshine!"

"One like me!—A girl of my years and indiscretion would hardly make a fit companion for the boldest scout and surest hunter on the lines!"

"Ah! Mabel, I fear me, that I have been improving a red-skin's gifts, with a pale-face's natur'! Such a character would insure a wife, in an Indian village."

"Surely, surely, Pathfinder, you would not think of choosing one as ignorant, as frivolous, as vain, and as inexperienced as I, for your wife!" Mabel would have added, "and as young," but an instinctive feeling of delicacy repressed the words.

"And why not, Mabel? If you are ignorant of frontier usages, you know more than all of us, of pleasant anecdotes and town customs; as for frivolous, I know not what it means, but if it signifies beauty, ah's me! I fear it is no fault in my eyes. Vain you are not, as is seen by the kind manner in which you listen to all my idle tales about scoutings and trails; and as for experience, that will come with years. Besides, Mabel, I fear men think little of these matters, when they are about to take wives, I do."

"Pathfinder—your words—your looks—surely all this is meant in trifling—you speak in pleasantry!"

"To me it is always agreeable to be near you, Mabel, and I should sleep sounder this blessed night, than I have done for a week past, could I think that you find such discourse as pleasant as I do."

We shall not say that Mabel Dunham had not believed herself a favourite with the guide. This her quick, feminine sagacity had early discovered, and perhaps she had occasionally thought there had mingled with his regard and friendship, some of that manly tenderness which the ruder sex must be coarse indeed not to show, on occasions, to the gentler; but the idea that he seriously sought her for his wife, had never before crossed the mind of the spirited and ingenuous girl. Now, however, a gleam of something like the truth broke in upon her imagination, less induced by the words of her companion, perhaps, than by his manner. Looking earnestly into the rugged, honest countenance of the scout, Mabel's own features became concerned and grave, and when she spoke again, it was with a gentleness of manner that attracted him to her, even more powerfully than the words themselves were calculated to repel.

"You and I should understand each other, Pathfinder," she said, with an earnest sincerity, "nor should there be any cloud between us. You are too upright and frank to meet with any thing but sincerity and frankness in return. Surely—surely, all this means nothing—has no other connexion with your feelings, than such a friendship as one of your wisdom and character would naturally feel for a girl like me?"

"I believe it's all nat'ral, Mabel; yes, I do; the sarjeant tells me he had such feelings towards your own mother, and I think I've seen something like it, in the young people I have, from time to time, guided through the wilderness. Yes, yes—I dare say it's all nat'ral enough, and that makes it come so easy, and is a great comfort to me."

"Pathfinder, your words make me uneasy! Speak plainer, or change the subject for ever. You do not—cannot mean that—you—cannot wish me to understand—" even the tongue of the spirited Mabel faltered, and she shrunk with maiden shame, from adding what she wished so earnestly to say. Rallying her courage, however, and determined to know all

as soon and as plainly as possible, after a moment's hesitation she continued—"I mean, Pathfinder, that you do not wish me to understand that you seriously think of me as a wife?"

"I do, Mabel; that's it—that's just it, and you have put the matter in a much better point of view than I, with my forest gifts and frontier ways, would ever be able to do. The Sarjeant and I have concluded on the matter, if it is agreeable to you, as he thinks is likely to be the case, though I doubt my own power to please one who deserves the best husband America can produce."

Mabel's countenance changed from uneasiness to surprise, and then by a transition still quicker, from surprise to pain.

"My father!" she exclaimed. "My dear father has thought of my becoming your wife, Pathfinder!"

"Yes, he has, Mabel; he has indeed. He has even thought such a thing might be agreeable to you, and has almost encouraged me to fancy it might be true."

"But, you, yourself—you, certainly can care nothing, whether this singular expectation shall ever be realized or not?"

"Anan?"

"I mean, Pathfinder, that you have talked of this match more to oblige my father than any thing else; that your feelings are no way concerned, let my answer be what it may?"

The scout looked earnestly into the beautiful face of Mabel, which had flushed with the ardour and novelty of her sensations, and it was not possible to mistake the intense admiration that betrayed itself in every lineament of his ingenuous countenance.

"I have often thought myself happy, Mabel, when ranging the woods, on a successful hunt, breathing the pure air of the hills, and filled with vigour and health, but, I now know that it has all been idleness and vanity compared with the delight it would give me to know that you thought better of me than you think of most others."

"Better of you!—I do indeed think better of you, Pathfinder, than of most others—I am not certain that I do not think better of you, than of any other; for your truth, ho-

nesty, simplicity, justice and courage are scarcely equalled by any of earth."

"Ah! Mabel!—These are sweet and encouraging words from you, and the sarjeant, after all, was not as near wrong as I feared."

"Nay, Pathfinder—in the name of all that is sacred and just, do not let us misunderstand each other, in a matter of so much importance. While I esteem, respect—nay, reverence you, almost as much as I reverence my own dear father, it is impossible that I should ever become your wife—that I"——

The change in her companion's countenance was so sudden and so great, that the moment the effect of what she had uttered became visible in the face of the Pathfinder, Mabel arrested her own words, notwithstanding her strong desire to be explicit, the reluctance with which she could at any time cause pain being sufficient of itself to induce the pause. Neither spoke for some time, the shade of disappointment that crossed the rugged lineaments of the hunter, amounting so nearly to anguish, as to frighten his companion, while the sensation of choking became so strong in the Pathfinder, that he fairly griped his throat, like one who sought physical relief for physical suffering. The convulsive manner in which his fingers worked actually struck the alarmed girl with a feeling of awe.

"Nay, Pathfinder," Mabel eagerly added, the instant she could command her voice—"I may have said more than I mean, for all things of this nature are possible, and women, they say, are never sure of their own minds. What I wish you to understand is, that it is not likely that you and I should ever think of each other, as man and wife ought to think of each other."

"I do not—I shall never think in that way again, Mabel—" gasped forth the Pathfinder, who appeared to utter his words, like one just raised above the pressure of some suffocating substance. "No—no—I shall never think of you, or any one else, again, in that way."

"Pathfinder—dear Pathfinder—understand me—do not attach more meaning to my words than I do myself—a match like that would be unwise—unnatural, perhaps."

“Yes, unnat’ral—ag’in natur’; and so I told the sarjeant, but he *would* have it otherwise.”

“Pathfinder!—Oh! this is worse than I could have imagined—take my hand, excellent Pathfinder, and let me see that you do not hate me. For God’s sake smile upon me again!”

“Hate you, Mabel!—Smile upon you!—Ah’s me!”

“Nay, give me your hand; your hardy, true and manly hand—both, both, Pathfinder, for I shall not be easy until I feel certain that we are friends again, and that all this has been a mistake.”

“Mabel,” said the guide, looking wistfully into the face of the generous and impetuous girl, as she held his two hard and sunburnt hands in her own pretty and delicate fingers, and laughing in his own silent and peculiar manner, while anguish gleamed over lineaments which seemed incapable of deception, even while agitated with emotions so conflicting, “Mabel, the sarjeant was wrong!”

The pent-up feelings could endure no more, and the tears rolled down the cheeks of the scout like rain. His fingers again worked convulsively at his throat, and his breast heaved, as if it possessed a tenant of which it would be rid, by any effort, however desperate.

“Pathfinder!—Pathfinder!” Mabel almost shrieked,—“any thing but this—any thing but this. Speak to me, Pathfinder,—smile again—say one kind word—any thing to prove you can forgive me.”

“The sarjeant was wrong;” exclaimed the guide, laughing amid his agony, in a way to terrify his companion by the unnatural mixture of anguish and light-heartedness. “I knew it—I knew it, and said it; yes, the sarjeant was wrong, after all.”

“We can be friends, though we cannot be man and wife,” continued Mabel, almost as much disturbed as her companion, scarce knowing what she said; “we can always be friends, and always will.”

“I thought the sarjeant was mistaken,” resumed the Pathfinder, when a great effort had enabled him to command himself, “for I did not think my gifts were such as would please the fancy of a town-bred girl. It would have been better, Mabel, had he not over-persuaded me into a different

notion ; and it might have been better, too, had you not been so pleasant and confiding, like ; yes, it would."

"If I thought any error of mine had raised false expectations in you, Pathfinder, however unintentionally on my part, I should never forgive myself ; for, believe me, I would rather endure pain in my own feelings, than you should suffer."

"That's just it, Mabel ; that's just it. These speeches and opinions, spoken in so soft a voice, and in a way I'm so unused to in the woods, have done the mischief. But I now see plainly, and begin to understand the difference between us better, and will strive to keep down thought, and to go abroad again as I used to do, looking for the game and the inimy. Ah's me ! Mabel, I have indeed been on a false trail, since we met !"

"But you will now travel on the true one. In a little while you will forget all this, and think of me as a friend, who owes you her life."

"This may be the way in the towns, but I doubt if it's nat'ral to the woods. With us, when the eye sees a lovely sight, it is apt to keep it long in view, or when the mind takes in an upright and proper feeling, it is loath to part with it."

"But it is not a proper feeling that you should love me, nor am I a lovely sight. You will forget it all, when you come seriously to recollect that I am altogether unsuited to be your wife."

"So I told the sarjeant—but he would have it otherwise. I knew you was too young and beautiful for one of middle age, like myself, and who never was comely to look at, even in youth ; and then your ways have not been my ways, nor would a hunter's cabin be a fitting place for one who was educated among chiefs, as it were. If I were younger and comelier, though, like Jasper Eau-douce—"

"Never mind Jasper Eau-douce," interrupted Mabel, impatiently ; "we can talk of something else."

"Jasper is a worthy lad, Mabel ; ay, and a comely ;" returned the guileless guide, looking earnestly at the girl, as if he distrusted her judgment in speaking slightly of his friend. "Were I only half as comely as Jasper Western, my misgivings in this affair would not have been so great, and they might not have been so true."

"We will not talk of Jasper Western," repeated Mabel, the colour mounting to her temples—"he may be good enough in a gale, or on the lake, but he is not good enough to talk of here."

"I fear me, Mabel, he is better than the man who is likely to be your husband, though the sarjeant says that never can take place. But the sarjeant was wrong once, and he may be wrong twice."

"And who is likely to be my husband, Pathfinder?—This is scarcely less strange, than what has just passed between us!"

"I know it is nat'ral for like to seek like, and for them that have consorted much with officers' ladies, to wish to be officers' ladies themselves. But, Mabel, I may speak plainly to you, I know, and I hope my words will not give you pain, for, now I understand what it is to be disappointed in such feelings, I wouldn't wish to cause even a Mingo sorrow, on this head. But happiness is not always to be found in a marquee, any more than in a tent, and though the officers' quarters may look more tempting than the rest of the barracks, there is often great misery, between husband and wife, inside of their doors."

"I do not doubt it, in the least, Pathfinder; and did it rest with me to decide, I would sooner follow you to some cabin in the woods, and share your fortune, whether it might be better or worse, than go inside the door of any officer I know, with an intention of remaining there as its master's wife."

"Mabel, this is not what Lundie hopes, or Lundie thinks!"

"And what care I for Lundie? He is major of the 55th, and may command his men to wheel and march about as he pleases, but he cannot compel me to wed the greatest or the meanest of his mess: besides, what can you know of Lundie's wishes on such a subject?"

"From Lundie's own mouth. The sarjeant had told him that he wished me for a son-in-law; and the major being an old and a true friend, conversed with me on the subject: he put it to me, plainly, whether it would not be more ginerous in me to let an officer succeed, than to strive to make you share a hunter's fortune. I owned the truth, I did; and that was, that I thought it might; but when he told me that the quarter-master would be his choice, I would not abide by the condi-

tions. No—no—Mabel; I know Davy Muir well, and though he may make you a lady, he can never make you a happy woman, or himself a gentleman. I say this honestly, I do; for I now plainly see that the sarjeant has been wrong.”

“My father has been very wrong, if he has said or done aught to cause you sorrow, Pathfinder; and so great is my respect for you, so sincere my friendship, that were it not for one—I mean that no person need fear Lieutenant Muir’s influence with me. I would rather remain as I am, to my dying day, than become a lady, at the cost of being his wife.”

“I do not think you would say that which you do not feel, Mabel,” returned Pathfinder, earnestly.

“Not at such a moment, on such a subject, and least of all, to you. No; Lieutenant Muir may find wives where he can—my name shall never be on his catalogue.”

“Thank you—thank you, for that, Mabel; for though there is no longer any hope for me, I could never be happy were you to take to the Quarter-master. I feared the commission might count for something, I did, and I know the man. It is not jealousy that makes me speak in this manner, but truth, for I know the man. Now, were you to fancy a desarving youth, one like Jasper Western, for instance—”

“Why always mention Jasper Eau-douce, Pathfinder? he can have no concern with our friendship; let us talk of yourself, and of the manner in which you intend to pass the winter.”

“Ah’s me!—I’m little worth at the best, Mabel, unless it may be on a trail, or with the rifle; and less worth now that I’ve discovered the sarjeant’s mistake. There is no need, therefore, of talking of me. It has been very pleasant to me, to be near you so long, and even to fancy that the sarjeant was right; but that is all over now. I shall go down the lake with Jasper, and then there will be business to occupy us, and that will keep useless thoughts out of the mind.”

“And you will forget this—forget me—no, not forget me, either, Pathfinder; but you will resume your old pursuits, and cease to think a girl of sufficient importance to disturb your peace?”

“I never know’d it afore, Mabel, but girls, as you call

them, though gals is the name I've been taught to use, are of more account in this life, than I could have believed. Now, afore I know'd you, the new-born babe did not sleep more sweetly than I used to could; my head was no sooner on the root, or the stone, or mayhap on the skin, than all was lost to the senses, unless it might be to go over, in the night, the business of the day, in a dream, like; and there I lay till the moment came to be stirring, and the swallows were not more certain to be on the wing, with the light, than I to be afoot, at the moment I wished to be. All this seemed a gift, and might be calculated on, even in the midst of a Mingo camp; for I've been outlying, in my time, in the very villages of the vagabonds."

"And all this will return to you, Pathfinder; for one so upright and sincere will never waste his happiness on a mere fancy. You will dream again, of your hunts, of the deer you have slain, and of the beaver you have taken."

"Ah's me, Mabel, I wish never to dream again! Before we met, I had a sort of pleasure in following up the hounds, in fancy, as it might be; and even in striking a trail of the Iroquois—nay, I've been in skrimmages, and ambushments, in thought, like, and found satisfaction in it, according to my gifts; but all those things have lost their charms since I've made acquaintance with you. Now, I think no longer of any thing rude in my dreams, but the very last night we staid in the garrison, I imagined I had a cabin in a grove of sugar maples, and at the root of every tree was a Mabel Dunham, while the birds that were among the branches, sung ballads, instead of the notes that natur' gave, and even the deer stopped to listen. I tried to shoot a fa'an, but Killdeer missed fire, and the creatur' laughed in my face, as pleasantly as a young girl laughs in her merriment, and then it bounded away, looking back, as if expecting me to follow."

"No more of this, Pathfinder—we'll talk no more of these things," said Mabel, dashing the tears from her eyes; for the simple, earnest manner in which this hardy woodsman betrayed the deep hold she had taken of his feelings, nearly proved too much for her own generous heart. "Now, let us look for my father; he cannot be distant, as I heard his gun, quite near."

"The sarjeant was wrong—yes, he was wrong, and it's

of no avail to attempt to make the dove consort with the wolf."

"Here comes my dear father," interrupted Mabel; "let us look cheerful and happy, Pathfinder, as such good friends ought to look, and keep each other's secrets."

A pause succeeded; the serjeant's foot was heard crushing the dried twigs hard by, and then his form appeared shoving aside the bushes of a copse, quite near. As he issued into the open ground, the old soldier scrutinized his daughter and her companion, and speaking good-naturedly, he said—

"Mabel, child; you are young and light of foot—look for a bird I've shot, that fell just beyond the thicket of young hemlocks, on the shore; and, as Jasper is showing signs of an intention of getting under way, you need not take the trouble to clamber up this hill again, but we will meet you, on the beach, in a few minutes."

Mabel obeyed, bounding down the hill with the elastic step of youth and health. But, notwithstanding the lightness of her steps, the heart of the girl was heavy, and no sooner was she hid from observation, by the thicket, than she threw herself on the root of a tree, and wept as if her heart would break. The serjeant watched her until she disappeared, with a father's pride, and then turned to his companion, with a smile as kind and as familiar as his habits would allow him to use towards any.

"She has her mother's lightness and activity, my friend, with somewhat of her father's force," he said. "Her mother was not quite as handsome, I think myself; but the Dunhams were always thought comely, whether men or women. Well, Pathfinder, I take it for granted you've not overlooked the opportunity, but have spoken plainly to the girl? women like frankness, in matters of this sort."

"I believe Mabel and I understand each other, at last, sarjeant," returned the other, looking another way to avoid the soldier's face.

"So much the better. Some people fancy that a little doubt and uncertainty makes love all the livelier, but I am one of those who think the plainer the tongue speaks, the easier the mind will comprehend. Was Mabel surprised?"

"I fear she was, sarjeant; I fear she was taken quite by surprise—yes, I do."

"Well, well, surprises in love, are like an ambush in war, and quite as lawful; though it is not as easy to tell when a woman is surprised, as to tell when it happens to an enemy. Mabel did not run away, my worthy friend, did she?"

"No, sarjeant, Mabel did not try to escape; *that* I can say with a clear conscience."

"I hope the girl was not too willing, neither! Her mother was shy and coy for a month, at least—but frankness, after all, is a recommendation, in man or woman."

"That it is—that it is—and judgment, too."

"You are not to look for too much judgment in a young creature of twenty, Pathfinder, but it will come with experience. A mistake in you, or in me, for instance, might not be so easily overlooked, but in a girl of Mabel's years, one is not to strain at a gnat, lest they swallow a camel."

The reader will remember that Serjeant Dunham was not a Hebrew scholar.

The muscles of the listener's face twitched, as the serjeant was thus delivering his sentiments, though the former had now recovered a portion of that stoicism which formed so large a part of his character, and which he had probably imbibed from long association with the Indians. His eyes rose and fell, and once a gleam shot athwart his hard features, as if he were about to indulge in his peculiar laugh, but the joyous feeling, if it really existed, was as quickly lost in a look allied to anguish. It was this unusual mixture of wild and keen mental agony, with native, simple, joyousness, that had most struck Mabel, who, in the interview just related, had a dozen times been on the point of believing that her suitor's heart was only lightly touched, as images of happiness and humour gleamed over a mind that was almost infantine in its simplicity and nature; an impression, however, that was soon driven away, by the discovery of emotions so painful and so deep, that they seemed to harrow the very soul. Indeed, in this respect, the Pathfinder was a mere child: unpractised in the ways of the world, he had no idea of concealing a thought of any kind, and his mind received and reflected each emotion, with the pliability and readiness of that period of life; the infant scarcely yielding its wayward imagination to the passing impression, with greater facility, than this man, so simple in all his personal feelings,

so stern, stoical, masculine and severe in all that touched his ordinary pursuits.

"You say true, sarjeant," Pathfinder answered—"a mistake in one like you is a more serious matter."

"You will find Mabel sincere and honest in the end, give her but a little time."

"Ah's me, sarjeant!"

"A man of your merits, would make an impression on a rock, give him time, Pathfinder."

"Sarjeant Dunham, we are old fellow campaigners—that is, as campaigns are carried on here in the wilderness; and we have done so many kind acts to each other, that we can afford to be candid—what has caused you to believe that a girl like Mabel could ever fancy one as rude as I am?"

"What?—why a variety of reasons, and good reasons, too, my friend. Those same acts of kindness, perhaps, and the campaigns you mention; moreover, you are my sworn and tried comrade."

"All this sounds well, so far as you and I are consarned, but they do not touch the case of your pretty daughter. She may think these very campaigns have destroyed the little comeliness I may once have had, and I am not quite sartain that being an old friend of her father would lead any young maiden's mind into a particular affection for a suitor. Like loves like, I tell you, sarjeant, and my gifts are not altogether the gifts of Mabel Dunham."

"These are some of your old modest qualms, Pathfinder, and will do you no credit with the girl. Women distrust men who distrust themselves, and take to men who distrust nothing. Modesty is a capital thing in a recruit, I grant you; or in a young subaltern who has just joined, for it prevents his railing at the non-commissioned officers, before he knows what to rail at; I'm not sure it is out of place in a commissary, or a parson, but it's the devil and all when it gets possession of either a real soldier, or a lover. Have as little to do with it as possible, if you would win a woman's heart. As for your doctrine that like loves like, it is as wrong as possible, in matters of this sort. If like loved like, women would love one another, and men also. No—no—like loves dislike,"—the serjeant was merely a scholar of the camp, "and you have nothing to fear from Mabel on that score."

Look at Lieutenant Muir; the man has had five wives, already, they tell me, and there is no more modesty in him than there is in a cat-o'-nine-tails."

"Lieutenant Muir will never be the husband of Mabel Dunham, let him ruffle his feathers as much as he may."

"That is a sensible remark of yours, Pathfinder, for my mind is made up that you shall be my son-in-law. If I were an officer myself, Mr. Muir might have some chance; but time has placed one door between my child and myself, and I don't intend there shall be that of a marquee, also."

"Sarjeant, we must let Mabel follow her own fancy; she is young and light of heart, and God forbid that any wish of mine should lay the weight of a feather on a mind that is all gaiety now, or take one note of happiness from her laughter."

"Have you conversed freely with the girl?" the serjeant demanded quickly, and with some asperity of manner.

Pathfinder was too honest to deny a truth plain as that which the answer required, and yet too honourable to betray Mabel, and expose her to the resentment of one whom he well knew to be stern in his anger.

"We have laid open our minds," he said, "and though Mabel's is one that any man might love to look at, I find little there, sarjeant, to make me think any better of myself."

"The girl has not dared to refuse you—to refuse her father's best friend?"

Pathfinder turned his face away to conceal the look of anguish, that consciousness told him was passing athwart it, but he continued the discourse in his own quiet manly tones.

"Mabel is too kind to refuse any thing, or to utter harsh words to a dog. I have not put the question in a way to be downright refused, serjeant."

"And did you expect my daughter to jump into your arms, before you asked her? She would not have been her mother's child had she done any such thing, nor do I think she would have been mine. The Dunhams like plain dealing, as well as the King's Majesty, but they are no jumpers. Leave me to manage this matter for you, Pathfinder, and there shall be no unnecessary delay. I'll speak to Mabel myself, this very evening, using your name as principal in the affair."

"I'd rather not—I'd rather not, sarjeant. Leave the mat-

ter to Mabel and me, and I think all will come right in the end. Young girls are like timorous birds; they do not over-relish being hurried or spoken harshly to, neither. Leave the matter to Mabel and me."

"On one condition I will, my friend; and that is, that you promise me on the honour of a scout, that you will put the matter plainly to Mabel, the first suitable opportunity, and no mincing of words."

"I will ask her, sarjeant—yes, I will ask her, on condition that you promise not to meddle in the affair—yes, I will promise to ask Mabel the question whether she will marry me, even though she laugh in my face, at my doing so, on that condition."

Serjeant Dunham gave the desired promise, very cheerfully, for he had completely wrought himself up into the belief that the man he so much esteemed and respected himself, must be acceptable to his daughter. He had married a woman much younger than himself, and he saw no unfitness in the respective years of the intended couple. Mabel was educated so much above him, too, that he was not aware of the difference which actually existed between the parent and child, in this respect; for it is one of the most unpleasant features in the intercourse between knowledge and ignorance, taste and unsophistication, refinement and vulgarity, that the higher qualities are often necessarily subjected to the judgments of those who have absolutely no perception of their existence. It followed that Serjeant Dunham was not altogether qualified to appreciate his daughter's tastes, or to form a very probable conjecture what would be the direction taken by those feelings, which oftener depend on impulses and passion, than on reason. Still, the worthy soldier was not so wrong in his estimate of the Pathfinder's chances, as might at first appear. Knowing, as he well did, all the sterling qualities of the man, his truth, integrity of purpose, courage, self-devotion, disinterestedness, it was far from unreasonable to suppose that qualities like these would produce a deep impression on any female heart, where there was an opportunity to acquire a knowledge of their existence; and the father erred principally in fancying that the daughter might know, as it might be, by intuition, what he himself had acquired by years of intercourse and adventure.

As Pathfinder and his military friend descended the hill to the shore of the lake, the discourse did not flag. The latter continued to persuade the former that his diffidence, alone, prevented complete success with Mabel, and that he had only to persevere in order to prevail. Pathfinder was much too modest by nature, and had been too plainly, though so delicately, discouraged, in the recent interview, to believe all he heard; still the father used so many arguments that seemed plausible, and it was so grateful to fancy that the daughter might yet be his, the reader is not to be surprised, when he is told that this unsophisticated being did not view Mabel's recent conduct in precisely the light in which he may be inclined to view it himself. He did not credit all that the serjeant told him, it is true; but he began to think virgin coyness, and ignorance of her own feelings, might have induced Mabel to use the language she had.

"The Quarter Master is no favourite," said Pathfinder, in answer to one of his companion's remarks. "Mabel will never look on him as more than one who has had four or five wives already."

"Which is more than his share. A man may marry twice, without offence to good morals and decency, I allow; but four times is an aggravation."

"I should think even marrying once, what Master Cap calls a circumstance!" put in Pathfinder, laughing in his quiet way, for, by this time, his spirits had recovered some of their buoyancy.

"It is indeed, my friend, and a most solemn circumstance too. If it were not that Mabel is to be your wife, I would advise you to remain single. But here is the girl herself, and discretion is the word."

"Ah's me! sarjeant, I fear you are mistaken!"

CHAPTER IV.

"Thus was this place
A happy rural seat of various view."—MILTON.

MABEL was in waiting on the beach, and the canoe was soon launched. Pathfinder carried the party out through the surf, in the same skilful manner as he had brought it in, and, though Mabel's colour heightened with excitement, and her heart seemed often ready to leap out of her mouth again, they reached the side of the Scud without having received even a drop of spray.

Ontario is like a quick-tempered man, sudden to be angered, and as soon appeased. The sea had already fallen, and though the breakers bounded the shore, far as the eye could reach, it was merely in lines of brightness, that appeared and vanished, like the returning waves produced by a stone that had been dropped into a pool. The cable of the Scud was scarce seen above the water, and Jasper had already hoisted his sails, in readiness to depart, as soon as the expected breeze from the shore should fill the canvass.

It was just sun-set, as the cutter's mainsail flapped, and its stem began to sever the water. The air was light and southerly, and the head of the vessel was kept looking up along the south shore, it being the intention to get to the eastward again, as fast as possible. The night that succeeded was quiet, and the rest of those who slept, deep and tranquil.

Some difficulty occurred concerning the command of the vessel, but the matter had been finally settled by an amicable compromise. As the distrust of Jasper was far from being appeased, Cap retained a supervisory power, while the young man was allowed to work the craft, subject, at all times, to the control and interference of the old seaman. To this Jasper consented, in preference to exposing Mabel any longer to the dangers of their present situation; for, now that the violence of the elements had ceased, he well knew that the Montcalm would be in search of them. He had the discretion, however, not to reveal his apprehensions on this head, for it happened that the very means he deemed the best

to escape the enemy, were those which would be most likely to awaken new suspicions of his honesty, in the minds of those who held the power to defeat his intentions. In other words, Jasper believed that the gallant young Frenchman, who commanded the ship of the enemy, would quit his anchorage under the fort at Niagara, and stand up the lake, as soon as the wind abated, in order to ascertain the fate of the Scud ; keeping mid-way between the two shores, as the best means of commanding a broad view ; and that, on his part, it would be expedient to hug one coast or the other, not only to avoid a meeting, but as affording a chance of passing without detection, by blending his sails and spars with objects on the land. He preferred the south, because it was the weather shore, and because he thought it was that which the enemy would the least expect him to take, though it necessarily led near his settlements, and in front of one of the strongest posts he held in that part of the world.

Of all this however, Cap was happily ignorant, and the serjeant's mind was too much occupied with the details of his military trust to enter into these niceties, which so properly belonged to another profession. No opposition was made, therefore, and, ere morning, Jasper had apparently dropped quietly into all his former authority, issuing his orders freely, and meeting with obedience without hesitation or cavil.

The appearance of day, brought all on board on deck again, and, as is usual with adventurers on the water, the opening horizon was curiously examined, as objects started out of the obscurity, and the panorama brightened under the growing light. East, west, and north, nothing was visible but water, glittering in the rising sun ; but southward, stretched the endless belt of woods, that then held Ontario in a setting of forest verdure. Suddenly an opening appeared ahead, and then the massive walls of a château-looking house, with outworks, bastions, block-houses, and palisadoes, frowned on a head-land, that bordered the outlet of a broad stream. Just as the fort became visible, a little cloud rose over it, and the white ensign of France was seen fluttering from a lofty flag-staff.

Cap gave an ejaculation as he witnessed this ungrateful exhibition, and he cast a quick suspicious glance at his brother-in-law.

"The dirty table-cloth hung up to air, as my name is Charles Cap!" he muttered, "and we hugging this d—d shore, as if it were our wife and children, met on the return from an India v'y'ge! Harkee, Jasper, are you in search of a cargo of frogs, that you keep so near in to this New France?"

"I hug the land, sir, in the hope of passing the enemy's ship without being seen, for I think she must be somewhere down here to leeward."

"Ay, ay; this sounds well, and I hope it may turn out as you say. I trust there is no under-tow here?"

"We are on a weather shore, now," said Jasper, smiling; "and, I think you will admit, Master Cap, that a strong under-tow makes an easy cable: we owe all our lives to the under-tow of this very lake."

"French flummery!" growled Cap, though he did not care to be heard by Jasper. "Give me a fair, honest, English-Yankee-American tow, above board, and above water too, if I must have a tow at all, and none of your sneaking drift that is below the surface, where one can neither see nor feel. I dare say, if the truth could be come at, that this late escape of ours was all a contrived affair."

"We have now a good opportunity, at least, to reconnoitre the enemy's post at Niagara, brother, for such I take this fort to be," put in the serjeant. "Let us be all eyes in passing, and remember that we are almost in face of the enemy."

This advice of the serjeant's needed nothing to enforce it, for the interest and novelty of passing a spot occupied by human beings, were of themselves sufficient to attract deep attention in that scene of a vast but deserted nature. The wind was now fresh enough to urge the Scud through the water with considerable velocity, and Jasper eased her helm as she opened the river, and luffed nearly into the mouth of that noble strait, or river, as it is termed. A dull, distant, heavy roar came down through the opening in the banks, swelling on the currents of the air, like the deeper notes of some immense organ, and occasionally seeming to cause the earth, itself, to tremble.

"That sounds like surf on some long unbroken coast!" exclaimed Cap, as a swell, deeper than common came to his ears.

“Ay, that is such surf as we have in this quarter of the world,” Pathfinder answered. “There is no under-tow there, Master Cap, but all the water that strikes the rocks stays there, so far as going back ag’in is consarned. That is old Niagara that you hear, or this noble stream tumbling down a mountain !”

“No one will have the impudence to pretend that this fine broad river falls over yonder hills?”

“It does, Master Cap, it does; and all for the want of stairs, or a road, to come down by. This is natur’, as we have it up hereaway, though I dare say you beat us down on the ocean. Ah’s me! Mabel; a pleasant hour it would be if we could walk on the shore some ten or fifteen miles up this stream, and gaze on all that God has done there!”

“You have, then, seen these renowned falls, Pathfinder?” the girl eagerly enquired.

“I have—yes, I have; and an awful sight I witnessed at that same time. The Sarpent and I were out, scouting about the garrison there, when he told me that the traditions of his people gave an account of a mighty cataract in this neighbourhood, and he asked me to vary from the line of march a little to look at the wonder. I had heard some marvels consarning the spot, from the soldiers of the 60th, which is my nat’ral corps, like, and not the 55th, with which I have sojourned so much of late, but there are so many terrible liars in all rijiments, that I hardly believed half they had told me. Well, we went; and though we expected to be led by our ears, and to hear some of that awful roaring that we hear to-day, we were disappointed, for natur’ was not then speaking in thunder, as she is this morning. Thus it is, in the forest, Master Cap; there being moments when God seems to be walking abroad in power, and then, again, there is a calm over all, as if his spirit lay in quiet along the ’arth. Well, we came suddenly upon the stream, a short distance above the fall, and a young Delaware, who was in our company, found a bark canoe, and he would push into the current, to reach an island that lies in the very centre of the confusion and strife. We told him of his folly, we did, and we reasoned with him on the wickedness of tempting Providence by seeking danger that led to no ind; but the youth among the Delawares are very much the same as the youth among the soldiers, risky

and vain. All we could say did not change his mind, and the lad had his way. To me it seems, Mabel, that whenever a thing is really grand and potent, it has a quiet majesty about it, that is altogether unlike the frothy and flustering manner of smaller matters, and so it was with them rapids. The canoe was no sooner fairly in them, than down it went, as it might be, as one sails through the air on the 'arth, and no skill of the young Delaware could resist the stream. And yet he struggled manfully for life, using the paddle to the last, like the deer that is swimming to cast the hounds. At first, he shot across the current so swiftly, that we thought he would prevail, but he had miscalculated his distance, and when the truth really struck him, he turned the head up stream, and struggled in a way that was fearful to look at. I could have pitied him even had he been a Mingo! For a few moments his efforts were so frantic, that he actually prevailed over the power of the cataract; but natur' has its limits, and one faltering stroke of the paddle set him back, and then he lost ground, foot by foot, inch by inch, until he got near the spot where the river looked even and green, and as if it were made of millions of threads of water, all bent over some huge rock, when he shot backwards like an arrow and disappeared, the bow of the canoe tipping just enough to let us see what had become of him. I met a Mohawk, some years later, who had witnessed the whole affair, from the bed of the stream below, and he told me that the Delaware continued to paddle, in the air, until he was lost in the mists of the falls!"

"And what became of the poor wretch?" demanded Mabel, who had been strongly interested by the natural eloquence of the speaker.

"He went to the happy hunting-grounds of his people, no doubt; for though he was risky and vain, he was also just and brave. Yes, he died foolishly, but the Manitou of the red-skins has compassion on his creatur's, as well as the God of a Christian!"

A gun, at this moment, was discharged from a block-house near the fort, and the shot, one of light weight, came whistling over the cutter's mast, an admonition to approach no nearer. Jasper was at the helm, and he kept away, smiling at the same time, as if he felt no anger at the rudeness of

the salutation. The Scud was now in the current, and her outwa'd set soon carried her far enough to leeward to avoid the danger of a repetition of the shot, and then she quietly continued her course along the land. As soon as the river was fairly opened, Jasper ascertained that the Montcalm was not at anchor in it; and a man sent aloft came down with the report that the horizon showed no sail. The hope was now strong, that the artifice of Jasper had succeeded, and that the French commander had missed them by keeping the middle of the lake, as he steered towards its head.

All that day the wind hung to the southward, and the cutter continued her course about a league from the land, running six or eight knots the hour, in perfectly smooth water. Although the scene had one feature of monotony, the outline of unbroken forest, it was not without its interest and pleasures. Various head-lands presented themselves, and the cutter, in running from one to another, stretched across bays so deep, as almost to deserve the names of gulfs, but nowhere did the eye meet with the evidences of civilization. Rivers occasionally poured their tribute into the great reservoir of the lake, but their banks could be traced inland for miles, by the same outlines of trees; and even large bays, that lay embosomed in woods, communicating with Ontario, only by narrow outlets, appeared and disappeared, without bringing with them a single trace of a human habitation.

Of all on board, the Pathfinder viewed the scene with the most unmingled delight. His eyes feasted on the endless line of forest, and, more than once that day, notwithstanding he found it so grateful to be near Mabel, listening to her pleasant voice, and echoing, in feelings at least, her joyous laugh, did his soul pine to be wandering beneath the high arches of the maples, oaks, and lindens, where his habits had induced him to fancy lasting and true joys were only to be found. Cap viewed the prospect differently. More than once, he expressed his disgust at there being no light-houses, church-towers, beacons, or roadsteads with their shipping. Such another coast, he protested, the world did not contain; and, taking the serjeant aside, he gravely assured him that the region could never come to any thing, as the havens were neglected, the rivers had a deserted and useless look, and

that even the breeze had a smell of the forest about it, which spoke ill of its properties.

But the humours of the different individuals in her, did not stay the speed of the Scud. When the sun was setting, she was already a hundred miles on her route towards Oswego, into which river Serjeant Dunham now thought it his duty to go, in order to receive any communications that Major Duncan might please to make. With a view to effect this purpose, Jasper continued to hug the shore all night, and though the wind began to fail him towards morning, it lasted long enough to carry the cutter up to a point that was known to be but a league or two from the fort. Here the breeze came out light at the northward, and the cutter hauled a little from the land in order to obtain a safe offing should it come on to blow, or should the weather again get to be easterly.

When the day dawned, the cutter had the mouth of the Oswego well under her lee, distant about two miles, and just as the morning gun from the fort was fired, Jasper gave the order to ease off the sheets, and to bear up for his port. At that moment a cry from the forecastle drew all eyes towards the point on the eastern side of the outlet, and there, just without the range of shot from the light guns of the works, with her canvass reduced to barely enough to keep her stationary, lay the Montcalm, evidently in waiting for their appearance. To pass her was impossible, for, by filling her sails, the French ship could have intercepted them in a few minutes; and the circumstances called for a prompt decision. After a short consultation, the serjeant again changed his plan, determining to make the best of his way towards the station for which he had been originally destined, trusting to the speed of the Scud to throw the enemy so far astern, as to leave no clue to her movements.

The cutter, accordingly, hauled upon a wind, with the least possible delay, with every thing set that would draw. Guns were fired from the fort, ensigns shown, and the ramparts were again crowded. But sympathy was all the aid that Lundie could lend to his party, and the Montcalm, also firing four or five guns of defiance, and throwing abroad several of the banners of France, was soon in chase, under a cloud of canvass.

For several hours the two vessels were pressing through

the water as fast as possible, making short stretches to windward, apparently with a view to keep the port under their lee, the one to enter it, if possible, and the other to intercept it in the attempt.

At meridian, the French ship was hull down, dead to leeward, the disparity of sailing on a wind being very great, and some islands were near by, behind which Jasper said it would be possible for the cutter to conceal her future movements. Although Cap and the serjeant, and particularly Lieutenant Muir, to judge by his language, still felt a good deal of distrust of the young man, and Frontenac was not distant, this advice was followed, for time pressed, and the Quarter-Master discreetly observed that Jasper could not well betray them, without running openly into the enemy's harbour, a step they could at any time prevent, since the only cruiser of force the French possessed, at the moment, was under their lee, and not in a situation to do them any immediate injury.

Left to himself, Jasper Western soon proved how much was really in him. He weathered upon the islands, passed them, and, on coming out to the eastward, kept broad away, with nothing in sight, in his wake, or to leeward. By sunset, again, the cutter was up with the first of the islands that lie in the outlet of the lake, and ere it was dark she was running through the narrow channels, on her way to the long-sought station. At nine o'clock, however, Cap insisted that they should anchor, for the maze of islands became so complicated and obscure, that he feared, at every opening, the party would find themselves under the guns of a French fort. Jasper consented cheerfully, it being a part of his standing instructions to approach the station, under such circumstances as would prevent the men from obtaining any very accurate notions of its position, lest a deserter might betray the little garrison to the enemy.

The Scud was brought-to in a small retired bay, where it would have been difficult to find her by day-light, and where she was perfectly concealed at night, when all but a solitary sentinel on deck sought their rest. Cap had been so harassed during the previous eight-and-forty hours, that his slumbers were long and deep, nor did he awake from his first nap, until the day was just beginning to dawn. His eyes

were scarcely open, however, when his nautical instinct told him, that the cutter was under way. Springing up, he found the Scud threading the islands again, with no one on deck but Jasper and the pilot, unless the sentinel be excepted, who had not in the least interfered with movements that he had every reason to believe were as regular as they were necessary.

"How 's this, Master Western!" demanded Cap, with sufficient fierceness for the occasion—"are you running us into Frontenac, at last, and we all asleep below, like so many mariners waiting for the 'sentry go.'"

"This is according to orders, Master Cap, Major Duncan having commanded me never to approach the station, unless at a moment when the people were below; for he does not wish there should be more pilots in these waters, than the king has need of."

"Whe-e-e-w! a pretty job I should have made of running down among these bushes and rocks with no one on deck! Why a regular York branch could make nothing of such a channel."

"I always thought, sir," said Jasper smiling, "you would have done better, had you left the cutter in my hands, until she had safely reached her place of destination."

"We should have done it, Jasper, we should have done it, had it not been for a circumstance—these circumstances are serious matters, and no prudent man will overlook them."

"Well, sir, I hope there is now an end of them. We shall arrive in less than an hour, if the wind hold, and then you 'll be safe from any circumstances that I can contrive."

"Humph!"

Cap was obliged to acquiesce, and as every thing around him had the appearance of Jasper's being sincere, there was not much difficulty in making up his mind to submit. It would not have been easy, indeed, for a person the most sensitive on the subject of circumstances, to fancy that the Scud was anywhere in the vicinity of a port as long established, and as well known on the frontiers, as Frontenac. The islands might not have been literally a thousand in number, but they were so numerous and small as to baffle calculation, though occasionally one of larger size than common was passed. Jasper had quitted what might have been termed

the main channel, and was winding his way, with a good stiff breeze, and a favourable current, through passes that were sometimes so narrow that there appeared to be barely room sufficient for the Scud's spars to clear the trees, while at other moments he shot across little bays, and buried the cutter again, amid rocks, forests and bushes. The water was so transparent, that there was no occasion for the lead, and being of very equal depth, little risk was actually run, though Cap, with his maritime habits, was in a constant fever lest they should strike.

"I give it up!—I give it up, Pathfinder!"—the old seaman at length exclaimed, when the little vessel emerged in safety from the twentieth of these narrow inlets, through which she had been so boldly carried—"this is defying the very nature of seamanship, and sending all its laws and rules to the d—l!"

"Nay, nay, Salt-water, 't is the perfection of the art. You perceive that Jasper never falters, but, like a hound with a true nose, he runs with his head high, as if he had a strong scent. My life on it, the lad brings us out right in the ind, as he would have done in the beginning had we given him leave."

"No pilot, no lead, no beacons, buoys or light-houses, no—"

"Trail!" interrupted Pathfinder, "for that, to me, is the most mysterious part of the business. Water leaves no trail, as every one knows, and yet here is Jasper moving ahead as boldly as if he had before his eyes, the prints of moccasins on leaves, as plainly as we can see the sun in the heaven."

"D——e, if I believe there is even any compass!"

"Stand by, to haul down the jib," called out Jasper, who merely smiled at the remarks of his companion. "Haul down—starboard your helm—starboard hard—so—meet her—gently there with the helm—touch her lightly—now jump ashore with the fast, lad—no, heave—there are some of our people ready to take it."

All this passed so quickly as barely to allow the spectators time to note the different evolutions, ere the Scud had been thrown into the wind until her mainsail shivered, next cast a little by the use of the rudder only, and then she set bodily

alongside of a natural rocky quay, where she was immediately secured by good fasts run to the shore. In a word, the station was reached, and the men of the 55th were greeted by their expecting comrades, with the satisfaction that a relief usually brings.

Mabel sprang upon the shore with a delight which she did not care to express, and her father led his men after her, with an alacrity which proved how wearied he had become of the cutter. The station, as the place was familiarly termed by the soldiers of the 55th, was indeed a spot to raise expectations of enjoyment, among those who had been cooped up so long in a vessel of the dimensions of the *Scud*. None of the islands were high, though all lay at a sufficient elevation above the water, to render them perfectly healthy and secure. Each had more or less of wood, and the greater number, at that distant day, were clothed with the virgin forest. The one selected by the troops for their purpose was small, containing about twenty acres of land, and by some of the accidents of the wilderness it had been partly stripped of its trees, probably centuries before the period of which we are writing, and a little grassy glade covered nearly half its surface. It was the opinion of the officer who had made the selection of this spot for a military post, that a sparkling spring near by, had early caught the attention of the Indians, and that they had long frequented this particular place, in their hunts, or when fishing for salmon, a circumstance that had kept down the second growth, and given time for the natural grasses to take root, and to gain dominion over the soil. Let the cause be what it might, the effect was to render this island far more beautiful than most of those around it, and to lend it an air of civilization that was then wanting in so much of that vast region of country.

The shores of Station Island were completely fringed with bushes, and great care had been taken to preserve them, as they answered as a screen to conceal the persons and things collected within their circle. Favoured by this shelter, as well as by that of several thickets of trees, and different copses, some six or eight low huts had been erected to be used as quarters for the officer and his men, to contain stores, and to serve the purposes of kitchen, hospital, &c. These huts were built of logs, in the usual manner, had been roofed by

bark brought from a distance, lest the signs of labour should attract attention, and as they had now been inhabited some months, were as comfortable as dwellings of that description usually ever get to be.

At the eastern extremity of the island, however, was a small densely wooded peninsula, with a thicket of under-brush so closely matted, as nearly to prevent the possibility of seeing across it, so long as the leaves remained on the branches. Near the narrow neck that connected this acre with the rest of the island, a small block-house had been erected, with some attention to its means of resistance. The logs were bullet-proof, squared and jointed with a care to leave no defenceless points; the windows were loop-holes; the door massive and small, and the roof, like the rest of the structure was framed of hewn timber, covered properly with bark to exclude the rain. The lower apartment, as usual, contained stores and provisions; here indeed the party kept all their supplies; the second story was intended for a dwelling, as well as for the citadel, and a low garret was subdivided into two or three rooms, and could hold the pallets of some ten or fifteen persons. All the arrangements were exceedingly simple and cheap, but they were sufficient to protect the soldiers against the effects of a surprise. As the whole building was considerably less than forty feet high, its summit was concealed by the tops of the trees, except from the eyes of those who had reached the interior of the island. On that side the view was open from the upper loops, though bushes even there, more or less, concealed the base of the wooden tower.

The object being purely defence, care had been taken to place the block-house so near an opening in the lime-stone rock, that formed the base of the island, as to admit of a bucket's being dropped into the water, in order to obtain that great essential, in the event of a siege. In order to facilitate this operation, and to enfilade the base of the building, the upper stories projected several feet beyond the lower, in the manner usual to block-houses, and pieces of wood filled the apertures cut in the log flooring, which were intended as loops and traps. The communications between the different stories were by means of ladders. If we add, that these block-houses were intended as citadels, for garrisons or settlements to retreat to, in the cases of attacks, the general reader will

obtain a sufficiently correct idea of the arrangements it is our wish to explain.

But the situation of the island, itself, formed its principal merit as a military position. Lying in the midst of twenty others, it was not an easy matter to find it, since boats might pass quite near, and, by the glimpses caught through the openings, this particular island would be taken for a part of some other. Indeed, the channels between the islands, that lay around the one we have been describing, were so narrow that it was even difficult to say which portions of the land were connected, or which separated, even as one stood in their centre, with the express desire of ascertaining the truth. The little bay, in particular, that Jasper used as a harbour, was so embowered with bushes, and shut in with islands, that, the sails of the cutter being lowered, her own people, on one occasion, had searched for hours, before they could find the Scud, in their return from a short excursion among the adjacent channels, in quest of fish. In short, the place was admirably adapted to its present objects, and its natural advantages had been as ingeniously improved as economy and the limited means of a frontier post would very well allow.

The hour that succeeded the arrival of the Scud was one of hurried excitement. The party in possession had done nothing worthy of being mentioned, and wearied with their seclusion, they were all eager to return to Oswego. The serjeant and the officer he came to relieve, had no sooner gone through the little ceremonies of transferring the command, than the latter hurried on board the Scud, with his whole party; and Jasper, who would gladly have passed the day on the island, was required to get under way, forthwith, the wind promising a quick passage up the river, and across the lake. Before separating, however, Lieutenant Muir, Cap, and the serjeant had a private conference with the ensign, who had been relieved, in which the latter was made acquainted with the suspicions that existed against the fidelity of the young sailor. Promising due caution, the officer embarked, and in less than three hours from the time when she had arrived, the cutter was again in motion.

Mabel had taken possession of a hut, and with female readiness and skill, she made all the simple little domestic arrangements, of which the circumstances would admit, not

only for her own comfort, but for that of her father. To save labour, a mess table was prepared in a hut set apart for that purpose, where all the heads of the detachment were to eat, the soldier's wife performing the necessary labour. The hut of the serjeant, which was the best on the island, being thus freed from any of the vulgar offices of a household, admitted of such a display of womanly taste, that for the first time since her arrival on the frontier, the girl felt proud of her home. As soon as these important duties were discharged, she strolled out on the island, taking a path that led through the pretty glade, and which conducted to the only point that was not covered with bushes. Here she stood gazing at the limpid water, which lay with scarcely a ruffle on it, at her feet, musing on the novel situation in which she was placed, and permitting a pleasing and deep excitement to steal over her feelings, as she remembered the scenes through which she had so lately passed, and conjectured those which still lay veiled in the future.

"You're a beautiful fixture, in a beautiful spot, Mistress Mabel," said David Muir, suddenly appearing at her elbow, "and I'll no engage you're not just the handsomest of the two."

"I will not say, Mr. Muir, that compliments on my person are altogether unwelcome, for I should not gain credit for speaking the truth, perhaps," answered Mabel with spirit, "but I will say that if you would condescend to address to me some remarks of a different nature, I may be led to believe you think I have sufficient faculties to understand them."

"Hoot! your mind, beautiful Mabel, is polished just like the barrel of a soldier's musket, and your conversation is only too discreet and wise for a poor d——l, who has been chewing birch, up here these four years, on the lines, instead of receiving it in an application that has the virtue of imparting knowledge. But you are no sorry, I take it, young lady, that you've got your pretty foot on *terra firma*, once more."

"I thought so, two hours since, Mr. Muir, but the Scud looks so beautiful, as she sails through these vistas of trees, that I almost regret I am no longer one of her passengers."

As Mabel ceased speaking, she waved her handkerchief in return to a salutation from Jasper, who kept his eyes fasten-

ed on her form, until the white sails of the cutter had swept round a point, and were nearly lost behind its green fringe of leaves.

"There they go, and I'll no say 'joy go with them,' but may they have the luck to return safely, for without them we shall be in danger of passing the winter on this island; unless, indeed, we have the alternative of the castle at Quebec. Yon Jasper Eau-douce is a vagrant sort of a lad, and they have reports of him in the garrison, that it pains my very heart to hear. Your worthy father, and almost-as-worthy uncle, have none of the best opinion of him."

"I am sorry to hear it, Mr. Muir; I doubt not that time will remove all their distrust."

"If time would only remove mine, pretty Mabel," rejoined the Quarter-Master, in a wheedling tone, "I should feel no envy of the commander-in-chief. I think if I were in a condition to retire, the serjeant would just step into my shoes."

"If my dear father is worthy to step into your shoes, Mr. Muir," returned the girl, with malicious pleasure, "I'm sure that the qualification is mutual, and that you are every way worthy to step into his."

"The deuce is in the child! you would not reduce me to the rank of a non-commissioned officer, Mabel!"

"No indeed, sir, I was not thinking of the army at all, as you spoke of retiring. My thoughts were more egotistical, and I was thinking how much you reminded me of my dear father, by your experience, wisdom, and suitableness to take his place, as the head of a family."

"As its bridegroom, pretty Mabel, but not as its parent, or natural chief. I see how it is with you, loving your repartee, and brilliant with wit! Well, I like spirit in a young woman, so it be not the spirit of a scold. This Pathfinder is an extraordinair, Mabel, if truth may be said of the man."

"Truth should be said of him, or nothing. Pathfinder is my friend—my very particular friend, Mr. Muir, and no evil can be said of him, in my presence, that I shall not deny."

"I shall say nothing evil of him, I can assure you, Mabel; but, at the same time, I doubt if much good can be said in his favour."

"He is at least expert with the rifle," returned Mabel, smiling. "That *you* cannot deny."

"Let him have all the credit of his exploits in that way, if you please; but he is as illiterate as a Mohawk."

"He may not understand Latin, but his knowledge of Iroquois is greater than that of most men, and it is the more useful language of the two, in this part of the world."

"If Lundie, himself, were to call on me for an opinion which I admired most, your person or your wit, beautiful and caustic Mabel, I should be at a loss to answer. My admiration is so nearly divided between them, that I often fancy this is the one that bears off the palm, and then the other! Ah! The late Mrs. Muir was a paragon, in that way, also!"

"The latest Mrs. Muir, did you say, sir?" asked Mabel, looking up innocently at her companion.

"Hoot—hoot!—That is some of Pathfinder's scandal. Now, I dare say, that the fellow has been trying to persuade you, Mabel, that I have had more than one wife, already."

"In that case, his time would have been thrown away, sir, as every body knows that you have been so unfortunate as to have had four."

"Only three, as sure as my name is David Muir. The fourth is pure scandal—or, rather, pretty Mabel, she is yet *in petto*, as they say at Rome; and that means, in matters of love, in the heart, my dear."

"Well, I'm glad, I'm not that fourth person, *in petto*, or in any thing else, as I should not like to be a scandal!"

"No fear of that, charming Mabel; for were you the fourth, all the others would be forgotten, and your wonderful beauty and merit would, at once, elevate you to be the first. No fear of your being the fourth in any thing."

"There is consolation in that assurance, Mr. Muir," said Mabel laughing, "whatever there may be in your other assurance, for I confess I should prefer being even a fourth-rate beauty, to being a fourth wife."

So saying, she tripped away, leaving the Quarter-Master to meditate on his success. Mabel had been induced to use her female means of defence thus freely, partly because her suitor had of late been so pointed, as to stand in need of a pretty strong repulse, and partly on account of his innuendoes

against Jasper and the Pathfinder. Though full of spirit and quick of intellect, she was not naturally pert; but, on the present occasion, she thought circumstances called for more than usual decision. When she left her companion, therefore, she believed she was now finally released from attentions that she thought as ill bestowed as they were certainly disagreeable. Not so, however, with David Muir; accustomed to rebuffs, and familiar with the virtue of perseverance, he saw no reason to despair, though the half menacing, half self-satisfied manner in which he shook his head towards the retreating girl, might have betrayed designs as sinister as they were determined. While he was thus occupied, the Pathfinder approached, and got within a few feet of him, unseen.

"'T will never do, Quarter-Master, 't will never do!" commenced the latter, laughing in his noiseless way; "she is young and actyve, and none but a quick foot can overtake her. They tell me you are her suitor, if you're not her follower."

"And I hear the same of yourself, man, though the presumption would be so great, that I scarce can think it true."

"I fear you're right, I do; yes, I fear you're right!—when I consider myself—what I am—how little I know, and how rude my life has been, I altogether distrust my claim, even to think a moment, of one so tutored, and gay, and light of heart, and delicate—"

"You forget handsome," coarsely interrupted Muir.

"And handsome, too, I fear," returned the meek and self-abased guide; "I might have said handsome, at once, among her other qualities, for the young sa'an, just as it learns to bound, is not more pleasant to the eye of the hunter, than Mabel is lovely in mine. I do indeed fear that all the thoughts I have harboured about her, are vain and presumptuous."

"If you think this, my friend, of your own accord, and natural modesty, as it might be, my duty to you as an old fellow-campaigner compels me to say—"

"Quarter-Master," interrupted the other, regarding his companion keenly, "you and I have lived together much behind the ramparts of forts, but very little in the open woods, or in front of the enemy."

“Garrison or tent, it all passes for part of the same campaign, you know, Pathfinder; and then my duty keeps me much within sight of the store-houses, greatly contrary to my inclinations, as ye may well suppose, having yourself the ardour of battle in your temperament. But had ye heard what Mabel has just been saying of you, ye’d no think another minute of making yourself agreeable to the saucy and uncompromising hussy.”

Pathfinder looked earnestly at the lieutenant, for it was impossible he should not feel an interest in what might be Mabel’s opinion, but he had too much of the innate and true feeling of a gentleman, to ask to hear what another had said of him. Muir, however, was not to be foiled by this self-denial and self-respect; for, believing he had a man of great truth and simplicity to deal with, he determined to practise on his credulity, as one means of getting rid of his rivalry. He, therefore, pursued the subject, as soon as he perceived that his companion’s self-denial was stronger than his curiosity.

“You ought to know her opinion, Pathfinder,” he continued; “and I think every man ought to hear what his friends and acquaintances say of him; and so, by way of proving my own regard for your character and feelings, I’ll just tell you, in as few words as possible. You know that Mabel has a wicked malicious way with them eyes of her own, when she has a mind to be hard upon one’s feelings.”

“To me her eyes, Lieutenant Muir, have always seemed winning and soft—though I will acknowledge that they sometimes laugh—yes, I have known them to laugh; and that right heartily, and with downright good will.”

“Well, it was just that, then; her eyes were laughing with all their might, as it were, and in the midst of all her fun, she broke out with an exclamation to this effect—I hope ’t will no hurt your sensibility, Pathfinder?”

“I will not say, Quarter-Master, I will not say—Mabel’s opinion of me is of more account than that of most others.”

“Then I’ll no tell ye, but just keep discretion on the subject; and why should a man be telling another what his friends say of him, especially when they happen to say that which may not be pleasant to hear. I’ll not add another word to this present communication.”

"I cannot make you speak, Quarter-Master, if you are not so minded, and perhaps it is better for me not to know Mabel's opinion, as you seem to think it is not in my favour. Ah's me—if we could be what we wish to be, instead of being only what we are, there would be a great difference in our characters, and knowledge, and appearance. One may be rude, and coarse, and ignorant, and yet happy, if he does not know it; but it is hard to see our own failings, in the strongest light, just as we wish to hear the least about them."

"That's just the *rationale*, as the French say, of the matter; and so I was telling Mabel, when she ran away and left me. You noticed the manner in which she skipped off, as you approached?"

"It was very observable," answered Pathfinder, drawing a long breath, and clenching the barrel of his rifle, as if the fingers would bury themselves in the iron.

"It was more than observable—it was flagrant—that's just the word, and the dictionary wouldn't supply a better, after an hour's search. Well, you must know, Pathfinder, for I cannot reasonably deny you the gratification of hearing this—so you must know, the minx bounded off in that manner, in preference to hearing what I had to say in your justification."

"And what could you find to say in my behalf, Quarter-Master?"

"Why, d'ye understand, my friend, I was ruled by circumstances, and no ventured indiscreetly into generalities, but was preparing to meet particulars, as it might be, with particulars. If you were thought wild, half-savage, or of a frontier formation, I could tell her, ye know, that it came of the frontier, wild, and half-savage life ye'd led; and all her objections must cease at once, or there would be a sort of a misunderstanding with Providence."

"And did you tell her this, Quarter-Master?"

"I'll no swear to the exact words, but the idea was prevalent in my mind, ye'll understand. The girl was impatient, and would not hear the half I had to say; but away she skipped, as ye saw with your own eyes, Pathfinder, as if her opinion were fully made up, and she cared to listen no

longer. I fear her mind may be said to have come to its conclusion."

"I fear it has, indeed, Quarter-Master, and her father, after all, is mistaken. Yes, yes; the sarjeant has fallen into a grievous error."

"Well, man, why need ye lament, and undo all the grand reputation ye've been so many weary years making? Shoulder the rifle that ye use so well, and off into the woods with ye, for there's not the female breathing that is worth a heavy heart for a minute, as I know from experience. Tak' the word of one who knows the sax, and has had two wives, that women, after all, are very much the sort of creatures we do not imagine them to be. Now, if you would really mortify Mabel, here is as glorious an occasion, as any rejected lover could desire."

"The last wish I have, lieutenant, would be to mortify Mabel."

"Well, ye'll come to that in the end, notwithstanding; for it's human nature to desire to give unpleasant feelings to them, that give unpleasant feelings to us. But a better occasion never offered to make your friends love you, than is to be had at this very moment, and that is the certain means of causing one's enemies to envy us."

"Quarter-Master, Mabel is not my inemy; and if she was, the last thing I could desire, would be to give her an uneasy moment."

"Ye say so, Pathfinder—ye say so, and I dare say, ye think so; but reason and nature are both against you, as ye'll find in the end. Ye've heard the saying of 'love me, love my dog:' well, now, that means, read backwards, 'don't love me, don't love my dog.' Now, listen to what is in your power to do. You know we occupy an exceedingly precarious and uncertain position here, almost in the jaws of the lion, as it were?"

"Do you mean the Frenchers, by the lion, and this island as his jaws, lieutenant?"

"Metaphorically only, my friend, for the French are no lions, and this island is not a jaw—unless, indeed, it may prove to be, what I greatly fear may come true, the jaw-bone of an ass!"

Here the Quarter-Master indulged in a sneering laugh,

that proclaimed any thing but respect and admiration for his friend Lundie's sagacity in selecting that particular spot for his operations.

"The post is as well chosen, as any I ever put foot in," said Pathfinder, looking around him, as one surveys a picture.

"I'll no deny it—I'll no deny it. Lundie is a great soldier, in a small way; and his father was a great laird, with the same qualification. I was born on the estate, and have followed the Major so long, that I've got to reverence all he says and does. That's just my weakness ye'll know, Pathfinder. Well, this post may be the post of an ass, or of a Solomon, as men fancy; but its most critically placed, as is apparent by all Lundie's precautions and injunctions. There are savages out, scouting through these thousand islands, and over the forest, searching for this very spot, as is known to Lundie himself, on certain information; and the greatest service you can render the 55th, is to discover their trails, and lead them off, on a false scent. Unhappily, Serjeant Dunham has taken up the notion, that the danger is to be apprehended from up-stream, because Frontenac lies above us; whereas, all experience tells us, that Indians come on the side that is most contrary to reason, and, consequently, are to be expected from below. Take your canoe, therefore, and go down stream, among the islands, that we may have notice if any danger approaches from that quarter. If ye should look a few miles on the main, especially on the York side, the information you'd bring in would be all the more accurate, and, consequently, the more valuable.

"The Big Sarpent is on the look-out, in that quarter, and as he knows the station well, no doubt he will give us timely notice, should any wish to sarcumvent us, in that direction."

"He is but an Indian, after all, Pathfinder, and this is an affair that calls for the knowledge of a white man. Lundie will be eternally grateful to the man that shall help this little enterprise to come off with flying colours. To tell you the truth, my friend, he is conscious it should never have been attempted; but he has too much of the old laird's obstinacy about him, to own an error, though it be as manifest as the morning star."

The Quarter-Master then continued to reason with his

companion, in order to induce him to quit the island, without delay, using such arguments as first suggested themselves, sometimes contradicting himself, and not unfrequently urging at one moment a motive that at the next was directly opposed by another. The Pathfinder, simple as he was, detected these flaws in the lieutenant's philosophy, though he was far from suspecting that they proceeded from a desire to clear the coast of Mabel's suitor. He met bad reasons by good ones, resisted every inducement that was not legitimate, by his intimate acquaintance with his peculiar duties, and was blind, as usual, to the influence of every incentive that could not stand the test of integrity. He did not exactly suspect the secret objects of Muir, but he was far from being blind to his sophistry. The result was that the two parted, after a long dialogue, unconvinced and distrustful of each other's motives, though the distrust of the guide, like all that was connected with the man, partook of his own upright, disinterested and ingenuous nature.

A conference that took place, soon after, between Serjeant Dunham and the lieutenant, led to more consequences. When it was ended, secret orders were issued to the men, the block-house was taken possession of, the huts were occupied, and one accustomed to the movements of soldiers, might have detected that an expedition was in the wind. In fact, just as the sun was setting, the serjeant, who had been much occupied at what was called the harbour, came into his own hut, followed by Pathfinder and Cap, and as he took his seat at the neat table that Mabel had prepared for him, he opened the budget of his intelligence.

"You are likely to be of some use, here, my child;" the old soldier commenced, "as this tidy and well-ordered supper can testify; and, I trust, when the proper moment arrives, you will show yourself to be the descendant of those who know how to face their enemies."

"You do not expect me, dear father, to play Joan of Arc, and to lead the men to battle?"

"Play whom, child—did you ever hear of the person Mabel mentions, Pathfinder?"

"Not I, sarjeant; but what of that? I am ignorant and uneducated, and it is too great a pleasure to me to listen to her voice, and take in her words, to be particular about persons."

"I know her," said Cap, decidedly; "she sailed a privateer out of Morlaix, in the last war; and good cruises she made of them."

Mabel blushed at having inadvertently made an allusion that went beyond her father's reading, to say nothing of her uncle's dogmatism; and, perhaps, a little at the Pathfinder's simple, ingenuous earnestness; but she did not forbear the less to smile.

"Why, father, I am not expected to fall in with the men, and to help defend the island?"

"And, yet, women have often done such things, in this quarter of the world, girl, as our friend, the Pathfinder, here, will tell you. But, lest you should be surprised at not seeing us, when you awake in the morning, it is proper that I now tell you we intend to march in the course of this very night."

"We, father—and leave me and Jennie on this island alone!"

"No, my daughter, not quite as unmilitary as that. We shall leave Lieutenant Muir, brother Cap, Corporal McNab, and three men, to compose the garrison during our absence. Jennie will remain with you in this hut, and brother Cap will occupy my place."

"And Mr. Muir?" said Mabel, half unconscious of what she uttered, though she foresaw a great deal of unpleasant persecution in the arrangement.

"Why, he can make love to you, if you like it, girl; for he is an amorous youth, and having already disposed of four wives, is impatient to show how much he honours their memories, by taking a fifth."

"The Quarter-Master tells me," said Pathfinder, innocently, "that when a man's feelings have been harrowed by so many losses, there is no wiser way to soothe them, than by ploughing up the soil anew, in such a manner as to leave no traces of what have gone over it before."

"Ay, that is just the difference between ploughing and harrowing," returned the serjeant with a grim smile. "But let him tell Mabel his mind, and there will be an end of his suit. I very well know that *my* daughter will never be the wife of Lieutenant Muir."

This was said in a way that was tantamount to declaring

that no daughter of his, ever *should* become the wife of the person in question. Mabel had coloured, trembled, half laughed, and looked uneasy; but, rallying her spirit, she said in a voice so cheerful as completely to conceal her agitation—

“But, father, we might better wait until Mr. Muir manifests a wish that your daughter would have him—or rather a wish to have your daughter, lest we get the fable of sour grapes thrown into our faces.”

“And what is that fable, Mabel,” eagerly demanded Pathfinder, who was any thing but learned in the ordinary lore of white men—“tell it to us, in your own pretty way; I dare say the sarjeant never heard it.”

Mabel repeated the well-known fable, and as her suitor had desired, in her own pretty way, which was a way to keep his eyes riveted on her face, and the whole of his honest countenance covered with a smile.

“That was like a fox!” cried Pathfinder, when she had ceased, “ay, and like a Mingo, too, cunning and cruel; that is the way with both the riptyles. As to grapes, they are sour enough in this part of the country, even to them that can get at them, though I dare say there are seasons, and times, and places, where they are sourer to them that can’t. I should judge, now, my scalp is very sour in Mingo eyes.”

“The sour grapes will be the other way, child, and it is Mr. Muir who will make the complaint. You would never marry that man, Mabel?”

“Not she,” put in Cap; “a fellow who is only half a soldier, after all! The story of them there grapes is quite a circumstance.”

“I think little of marrying any one, dear father, and dear uncle, and would rather talk about it less, if you please. But, did I think of marrying at all, I do believe a man whose affections have already been tried by three or four wives would scarcely be my choice.”

The serjeant nodded at the guide, as much as to say, you see how the land lies; and then he had sufficient consideration for his daughter’s feelings to change the subject.

“Neither you, nor Mabel, brother Cap,” he resumed, “can have any legal authority with the little garrison I leave behind, on the island; but you may counsel and influence.

Strictly speaking, Corporal McNab will be the commanding officer, and I have endeavoured to impress him with a sense of his dignity, lest he might give way too much to the superior rank of Lieutenant Muir, who, being a volunteer, can have no right to interfere with the duty. I wish you to sustain the corporal, brother Cap, for should the Quarter-Master once break through the regulations of the expedition, he may pretend to command me, as well as McNab."

"More particularly, should Mabel really cut him adrift, while you are absent. Of course, serjeant, you'll leave every thing that is afloat, under my care? The most d——le confusion has grown out of misunderstandings between commanders-in-chief, ashore and afloat."

"In one sense, brother, though, in a general way, the corporal is commander-in-chief. History does indeed tell us that a division of command leads to difficulties, and I shall avoid that danger. The corporal must command, but you can counsel freely, particularly in all matters relating to the boats, of which I shall leave one behind, to secure your retreat should there be occasion. I know the corporal well; he is a brave man, and a good soldier; and one that may be relied on, if the Santa Cruz can be kept from him. But then he is a Scotchman, and will be liable to the Quarter-Master's influence, against which I desire both you and Mabel to be on your guard."

"But why leave us behind, dear father? I have come thus far to be a comfort to you, and why not go farther?"

"You are a good girl, Mabel, and very like the Dunhams! But you must halt here. We shall leave the island to-morrow, before the day dawns, in order not to be seen by any prying eyes, coming from our cover, and we shall take the two largest boats, leaving you the other, and one bark canoe. We are about to go into the channel used by the French, where we shall lie in wait, perhaps a week, to intercept their supply-boats that are about to pass up, on their way to Frontenac, loaded, in particular, with a heavy amount of Indian goods."

"Have you looked well to your papers, brother?" Cap anxiously demanded. "Of course, you know a capture on the high seas is piracy, unless your boat is regularly commissioned, either as a public, or a private armed cruiser."

"I have the honour to hold the colonel's appointment as Serjeant-Major of the 55th," returned the other, drawing himself up with dignity, "and that will be sufficient even for the French King. If not, I have Major Duncan's written orders."

"No papers them, for a warlike cruiser."

"They must suffice, brother, as I have no other. It is of vast importance to His Majesty's interests, in this part of the world, that the boats in question should be captured and carried into Oswego. They contain the blankets, trinkets, rifles, ammunition,—in short, all the stores with which the French bribe their accursed savage allies to commit their unholy acts, setting at naught our holy religion and its precepts, the laws of humanity, and all that is sacred and dear among men. By cutting off these supplies, we shall derange their plans, and gain time on them; for the articles cannot be sent across the ocean again, this autumn."

"But, father, does not his Majesty employ Indians, also?" asked Mabel, with some curiosity.

"Certainly, girl, and he has a right to employ them—God bless him! It's a very different thing, whether an Englishman or a Frenchman employs a savage, as every body can understand."

"That is plain enough, brother Dunham; but I do not see my way so clear, in the matter of the ship's papers."

"An *English* colonel's appointment ought to satisfy any *Frenchman* of my authority; and what is more, brother, it shall."

"But I do not see the difference, father, between an Englishman's and a Frenchman's employing savages in war?"

"All the odds in the world, child, though you may not be able to see it. In the first place, an Englishman is naturally humane and considerate, while a Frenchman is naturally ferocious and timid."

"And you may add, brother, that he will dance from morning till night, if you'll let him."

"Very true," gravely returned the serjeant.

"But, father, I cannot see that all this alters the case. If it be wrong in a Frenchman to hire savages to fight his enemies, it would seem to be equally wrong in an Englishman. You will admit this, Pathfinder?"

"It's reasonable—it's reasonable, and I have never been one of them that has raised a cry ag'in the Frenchers for doing the very thing we do ourselves. Still, it is worse to consort with a Mingo, than to consort with a Delaware. If any of that just tribe were left, I should think it no sin to send them out ag'in the foe."

"And yet they scalp, and slay young and old—women and children!"

"They have their gifts, Mabel, and are not to be blamed for following them. Natur' is natur', though the different tribes have different ways of showing it. For my part, I am white, and endeavour to maintain white feelings."

"This is all unintelligible to me," answered Mabel. "What is right in King George, it would seem, ought to be right in King Louis."

"The King of France's real name is Caput," observed Cap, with his mouth full of venison. "I once carried a great scholar, as a passenger, and he told me that these Lewises thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth, were all humbugs, and that the men's real name was Caput; which is French for 'head;' meaning that they ought to be put at the *foot* of the ladder, until ready to go up to be hanged."

"Well, this does look like being given to scalping, as a nat'ral gift," Pathfinder remarked, with the air of surprise with which one receives a novel idea, "and I shall have less compunction than ever in sarving ag'in the miscreants, though I can't say I ever yet felt any worth naming."

As all parties, Mabel excepted, seemed satisfied with the course the discussion had taken, no one appeared to think it necessary to pursue the subject. The trio of men, indeed, in this particular, so much resembled the great mass of their fellow-creatures, who usually judge of character equally without knowledge and without justice, that we might not have thought it necessary to record the discourse, had it not some bearing in its facts on the incidents of the legend, and in its opinions on the motives of the characters.

Supper was no sooner ended, than the serjeant dismissed his guests, and then held a long and confidential dialogue with his daughter. He was little addicted to giving way to the gentler emotions, but the novelty of his present situation awakened feelings that he was unused to experience. The

soldier, or the sailor, so long as he acts under the immediate supervision of a superior, thinks little of the risks he runs; but the moment he feels the responsibility of command, all the hazards of his undertaking begin to associate themselves in his mind, with the chances of success or failure. While he dwells less on his own personal danger, perhaps, than when that is the principal consideration, he has more lively general perceptions of all the risks, and submits more to the influence of the feelings which doubt creates. Such was now the case with Serjeant Dunham, who, instead of looking forward to victory as certain, according to his usual habits, began to feel the possibility that he might be parting with his child for ever.

Never before had Mabel struck him as so beautiful, as she appeared that night. Possibly she never had displayed so many engaging qualities to her father; for concern on his account had begun to be active in her breast, and then her sympathies met with unusual encouragement, through those which had been stirred up in the sterner bosom of the veteran. She had never been entirely at her ease with her parent, the great superiority of her education creating a sort of chasm, which had been widened by the military severity of manner he had acquired, by dealing so long and intimately with beings who could only be kept in subjection by an unremitted discipline. On the present occasion, however, or after they were left alone, the conversation between the father and daughter became more confidential than usual, until Mabel rejoiced to find that it was gradually becoming endearing; a state of feeling that the warm-hearted girl had silently pined for in vain, ever since her arrival.

"Then, mother was about my height?" Mabel said, as she held one of her father's hands in both her own, looking up into his face with humid eyes. "I had thought her taller."

"That is the way with most children, who get a habit of thinking of their parents with respect; until they fancy them larger and more commanding than they actually are. Your mother, Mabel, was as near your height, as one woman could be to another."

"And her eyes, father?"

"Her eyes were like thine, child, too—blue and soft, and inviting like; though hardly so laughing."

"Mine will never laugh again, dearest father, if you do not take care of yourself in this expedition."

"Thank you, Mabel—hem—thank you, child; but I must do my duty. I wish I had seen you comfortably married before we left Oswego!—my mind would be easier."

"Married!—to whom, father?"

"You know the man I wish you to love. You may meet with many gayer, and many dressed in finer clothes; but with none with so true a heart, and just a mind."

"None, father?"

"I know of none; in these particulars, Pathfinder has few equals, at least."

"But I need not marry at all. You are single, and I can remain to take care of you."

"God bless you, Mabel!—I know you would, and I do not say that the feeling is not right, for I suppose it is; and yet I believe there is another, that is more so."

"What can be more right than to honour one's parents?"

"It is just as right to honour one's husband, my dear child."

"But I have no husband, father."

"Then take one, as soon as possible, that you may have a husband to honour. I cannot live for ever, Mabel, but must drop off in the course of nature, ere long, if I am not carried off in the course of war. You are young, and may yet live long; and it is proper that you should have a male protector, who can see you safe through life, and take care of you in age, as you now wish to take care of me."

"And do you think, father—" said Mabel, playing with his sinewy fingers, with her own little hands, and looking down at them, as if they were subjects of intense interest, though her lips curled in a slight smile, as the words came from them—"and do you think, father, that Pathfinder is just the man to do this?—Is he not, within ten or twelve years, as old as yourself?"

"What of that?—His life has been one of moderation and exercise, and years are less to be counted, girl, than constitution. Do you know another more likely to be your protector?"

Mabel did not; at least another who had expressed a desire to that effect, whatever might have been her hopes and her wishes.

"Nay, father, we are not talking of another, but of the Pathfinder," she answered evasively. "If he were younger, I think it would be more natural for me to think of him for a husband."

"'Tis all in the constitution, I tell you, child: Pathfinder is a younger man than half our subalterns."

"He is certainly younger than one, sir—Lieutenant Muir."

Mabel's laugh was joyous and light-hearted, as if just then she felt no care.

"That he is—young enough to be his grandson—he is younger in years too. God forbid, Mabel! that you should ever become an officer's lady, at least until you are an officer's daughter."

"There will be little fear of that, father, if I marry Pathfinder!" returned the girl, looking up archly in the serjeant's face again.

"Not by the King's commission, perhaps, though the man is even now the friend and companion of generals. I think I could die happy, Mabel, if you were his wife."

"Father!"

"'Tis a sad thing to go into battle, with the weight of an unprotected daughter laid upon the heart."

"I would give the world to lighten yours of its load, my dear sir!"

"It might be done—" said the serjeant, looking fondly at his child, "though I could not wish to put a burthen on yours, in order to do so."

The voice was deep and tremulous, and never before had Mabel witnessed such a show of affection in her parent. The habitual sternness of the man, lent an interest to his emotions, that they might otherwise have wanted, and the daughter's heart yearned to relieve the father's mind.

"Father, speak plainly," she cried, almost convulsively.

"Nay, Mabel, it might not be right—your wishes and mine may be very different."

"I have no wishes—know nothing of what you mean—would you speak of my future marriage?"

"If I could see you promised to Pathfinder—know that you were pledged to become his wife, let my own fate be what it might, I think I could die happy. But I will ask no pledge of you, my child—I will not force you to do

what you might repent. Kiss me, Mabel, and go to your bed."

Had Serjeant Dunham exacted of Mabel the pledge that he really so much desired, he would have encountered a resistance that he might have found difficult to overcome; but, by letting nature have its course, he enlisted a powerful ally on his side, and the warm-hearted, generous-minded Mabel was ready to concede to her affections, much more than she would ever have yielded to menace. At that touching moment she thought only of her parent, who was about to quit her, perhaps for ever; and all of that ardent love for him, which had possibly been as much fed by the imagination as by any thing else, but which had received a little check by the restrained intercourse of the last fortnight, now returned with a force that was increased by pure and intense feeling. Her father seemed all in all to her, and to render him happy, there was no proper sacrifice that she was not ready to make. One painful, rapid, almost wild gleam of thought shot across the brain of the girl, and her resolution wavered; but endeavouring to trace the foundation of the pleasing hope on which it was based, she found nothing positive to support it. Trained like a woman, to subdue her most ardent feelings, her thoughts reverted to her father, and to the blessings that awaited the child who yielded to a parent's wishes.

"Father," she said quietly, almost with a holy calm—"God blesses the dutiful daughter!"

"He will, Mabel; we have the good book for that."

"I will marry whomever you desire."

"Nay—nay, Mabel—you may have a choice of your own"—

"I have no choice—that is—none have asked me to have a choice, but Pathfinder and Mr. Muir; and between *them*, neither of us would hesitate. No, father; I will marry whomever you may choose."

"Thou knowest my choice, beloved child; none other can make thee as happy, as the noble-hearted guide."

"Well then, if he wish it—if he ask me again—for, father, you would not have me offer myself, or that any one should do that office for me"—and the blood stole across the pallid cheeks of Mabel, as she spoke, for high and generous resolutions had driven back the stream of life to her heart,—“no

one must speak to him of it; but if he seek me again, and, knowing all that a true girl ought to tell the man she marries, and he then wishes to make me his wife, I will be his."

"Bless you, my Mabel—God in heaven bless you, and reward you as a pious daughter deserves to be rewarded."

"Yes, father—put your mind at peace—go on this expedition with a light heart, and trust in God. For me, you will have, now, no care. In the spring—I must have a little time, father—but, in the spring, I will marry Pathfinder, if that noble-hearted hunter shall then desire it."

"Mabel, he loves you as I loved your mother. I have seen him weep like a child, when speaking of his feelings towards you."

"Yes, I believe it—I've seen enough to satisfy me, that he thinks better of me than I deserve; and certainly the man is not living for whom I have more respect, than for Pathfinder; not even for you, dear father."

"That is as it should be, child, and the union will be blessed. May I not tell Pathfinder this?"

"I would rather you would not, father. Let it come of itself—come naturally—the man should seek the woman, and not the woman the man—" The smile that illuminated Mabel's handsome face, was angelic, as even her parent thought, though one better practised in detecting the passing emotions, as they betray themselves in the countenance, might have traced something wild and unnatural in it—"No—no—we must let things take their course; father, you have my solemn promise."

"That will do—that will do, Mabel; now kiss me—God bless and protect you, girl—you are a good daughter."

Mabel threw herself into her father's arms,—it was the first time in her life,—and sobbed on his bosom like an infant. The stern soldier's heart was melted, and the tears of the two mingled: but Serjeant Dunham soon started, as if ashamed of himself, and gently forcing his daughter from him, he bade her good night, and sought his pallet. Mabel went sobbing to the rude corner that had been prepared for her reception, and in a few minutes the hut was undisturbed by any sound, save the heavy breathing of the veteran.

CHAPTER V.

“Wandering, I found on my ruinous walk,
By the dial stone, aged and green,
One rose of the wilderness, left on its stalk,
To mark where a garden had been.”

CAMPBELL.

It was not only broad day-light, when Mabel awoke, but the sun had actually been up some time. Her sleep had been tranquil, for she rested on an approving conscience, and fatigue contributed to render it sweet; and no sound of those who had been so early in motion, had interfered with her rest. Springing to her feet, and rapidly dressing herself, the girl was soon breathing the fragrance of the morning, in the open air. For the first time, she was sensibly struck with the singular beauties, as well as with the profound retirement of her present situation. The day proved to be one of those of the autumnal glory, so common to a climate that is more abused than appreciated, and its influence was every way inspiring and genial. Mabel was benefited by this circumstance, for, as she fancied, her heart was heavy on account of the dangers to which a father, whom she now began to love, as women love, when confidence is created.

But the island seemed absolutely deserted. The previous night, the bustle of the arrival had given the spot an appearance of life that was now entirely gone, and our heroine had turned her eyes nearly around on every object in sight, before she caught a view of a single human being to remove the sense of utter solitude. Then, indeed, she beheld all who were left behind, collected in a group, around a fire which might be said to belong to the camp. The person of her uncle, to whom she was so much accustomed, reassured the girl, and she examined the remainder, with a curiosity natural to her situation. Besides Cap, and the Quarter-Master, there were the corporal, the three soldiers, and the woman who was cooking. The huts were silent and empty, and the low, but tower-like summit of the block-house, rose above the bushes, by which it was half concealed, in picturesque beauty. The sun was just casting its brightness into the open places of the

glade, and the vault, over her head, was impending in the soft sublimity of the blue void. Not a cloud was visible, and she secretly fancied the circumstance might be taken as a harbinger of peace and security.

Perceiving that all the others were occupied with that great concern of human nature, a breakfast, Mabel walked, unobserved, towards an end of the island, where she was completely shut out of view, by the trees and bushes. Here she got a stand on the very edge of the water, by forcing aside the low branches, and stood watching the barely perceptible flow and re-flow of the miniature waves that laved the shore; a sort of physical echo to the agitation that prevailed on the lake, fifty miles above her. The glimpses of natural scenery that offered, were very soft and pleasing; and, our heroine, who had a quick and true eye for all that was lovely in nature, was not slow in selecting the most striking bits of landscape. She gazed through the different vistas formed by the openings between the islands, and thought she had never looked on aught more lovely.

While thus occupied, Mabel was suddenly alarmed by fancying that she caught a glimpse of a human form, among the bushes that lined the shore of the island that lay directly before her. The distance across the water was not a hundred yards, and though she might be mistaken, and her fancy was wandering when the form passed before her sight, still she did not think she could be deceived. Aware that her sex would be no protection against a rifle-bullet, should an Iroquois get a view of her, the girl instinctively drew back, taking care to conceal her person as much as possible by the leaves, while she kept her own look riveted on the opposite shore, vainly waiting for some time, in the expectation of the stranger. She was about to quit her post in the bushes, and hasten to her uncle in order to acquaint him of her suspicions, when she saw the branch of an alder thrust beyond the fringe of bushes, on the other island, and waved toward her significantly, and, as she fancied in token of amity. This was a breathless and a trying moment, to one as inexperienced in frontier warfare as our heroine, and yet she felt the great necessity that existed for preserving her recollection, and of acting with steadiness and discretion.

It was one of the peculiarities of the exposure to which

those who dwelt on the frontiers of America were liable, to bring out the moral qualities of the women to a degree that they must themselves, under other circumstances, have believed they were incapable of manifesting; and Mabel well knew that the borderers loved to dwell, in their legends, on the presence of mind, fortitude, and spirit that their wives and sisters had displayed, under circumstances the most trying. Her emulation had been awakened by what she had heard on such subjects; and it at once struck her, that now was the moment for her to show that she was truly Serjeant Dunham's child. The motion of the branch was such as, she believed, indicated amity; and, after a moment's hesitation, she broke off a twig, fastened it to a stick, and, thrusting it through an opening, waved it in return, imitating, as closely as possible, the manner of the other.

This dumb show lasted two or three minutes on both sides, when Mabel perceived that the bushes opposite were cautiously pushed aside, and a human face appeared at an opening. A glance sufficed to let Mabel see that it was the countenance of a red-skin, as well as that of a woman. A second and a better look satisfied her that it was the face of the Dew of June, the wife of Arrowhead. During the time she had travelled in company with this woman, Mabel had been won by the gentleness of manner, the meek simplicity, and the mingled awe and affection with which she regarded her husband. Once or twice, in the course of the journey, she fancied the Tuscarora had manifested towards herself an unpleasant degree of attention; and on those occasions, it had struck her, that his wife exhibited sorrow and mortification. As Mabel, however, had more than compensated for any pain she might, in this way, unintentionally have caused her companion, by her own kindness of manner and attentions, the woman had shown much attachment to her, and they had parted, with a deep conviction on the mind of our heroine, that in the Dew of June she had lost a friend.

It is useless to attempt to analyze all the ways by which the human heart is led into confidence. Such a feeling, however, had the young Tuscarora woman awakened in the breast of our heroine; and the latter, under the impression that this extraordinary visit was intended for her own good, felt every disposition to have a closer communication. She

no longer hesitated about showing herself clear of the bushes, and was not sorry to see the Dew of June imitate her confidence, by stepping fearlessly out of her own cover. The two girls, for the Tuscarora, though married, was even younger than Mabel, now openly exchanged signs of friendship, and the latter beckoned to her friend to approach, though she knew not the manner, herself, in which this object could be effected. But the Dew of June was not slow in letting it be seen that it was in her power; for, disappearing a moment, she soon showed herself again in the end of a bark canoe, the bows of which she had drawn to the edge of the bushes, and of which the body still lay in a sort of covered creek. Mabel was about to invite her to cross, when her own name was called aloud, in the stentorian voice of her uncle. Making a hurried gesture for the Tuscarora girl to conceal herself, Mabel sprang from the bushes, and tripped up the glade towards the sound, and perceived that the whole party had just seated themselves at breakfast; Cap having barely put his appetite under sufficient restraint to summon her to join them. That this was the most favourable instant for the interview flashed on the mind of Mabel; and, excusing herself on the plea of not being prepared for the meal, she bounded back to the thicket, and soon renewed her communications with the young Indian woman.

Dew of June was quick of comprehension; and with half-a-dozen noiseless strokes of the paddles, her canoe was concealed in the bushes of Station Island. In another minute, Mabel held her hand, and was leading her through the grove towards her own hut. Fortunately, the latter was so placed as to be completely hid from the sight of those at the fire, and they both entered it unseen. Hastily explaining to her guest, in the best manner she could, the necessity of quitting her for a short time, Mabel, first placing the Dew of June in her own room, with a full certainty that she would not quit it until told to do so, went to the fire, and took her seat among the rest, with all the composure it was in her power to command.

"Late come, late served, Mabel," said her uncle, between two mouthfuls of broiled salmon, for though the cookery might be very unsophisticated on that remote frontier, the

viands were generally delicious; "late come, late served: it is a good rule, and keeps laggards up to their work."

"I am no laggard, uncle, for I have been stirring near an hour, and exploring our island."

"It's little you'll make o' that, Mistress Mabel," put in Muir, "that's little by nature. Lundie, or it might be better to style him Major Duncan in this presence"—this was said in consideration of the corporal and the common men, though they were taking their meal a little apart—"it might be better to style him Major Duncan in this presence, has not added an empire to his Majesty's dominions in getting possession of this island, which is likely to equal that of the celebrated Sancho, in revenues and profits—Sancho of whom, doubtless, Master Cap, you'll often have been reading in your leisure hours, more especially in calms, and moments of inactivity."

"I know the spot you mean, Quarter-Master; Sancho's Island—coral rock, of new formation, and as bad a landfall, in a dark night and blowing weather, as a sinner could wish to keep clear of. It's a famous place for cocoa-nuts and bitter water, that Sancho's Island!"

"It's no very famous for dinners," returned Muir, repressing the smile that was struggling to his lips, out of respect to Mabel, "nor do I think there'll be much to choose between its revenue and that of this spot. In my judgment, Master Cap, this is a very unmilitary position, and I look to some calamity's befalling it, sooner or later."

"It is to be hoped not until our turn of duty is over," observed Mabel. "I have no wish to study the French language."

"We might think ourselves happy, did it not prove to be the Iroquois. I have reasoned with Major Duncan on the occupation of this position, but 'a wilfu' man maun ha' his way.' My first object, in accompanying this party, was to endeavour to make myself acceptable and useful to your beautiful niece, Master Cap; and the second was to take such an account of the stores that belong to my particular department, as shall leave no question open to controversy, concerning the manner of expenditure, when they shall have disappeared by means of the enemy."

"Do you look upon matters as so serious?" demanded

Cap, actually suspending his mastication of a bit of venison, for he passed alternately, like a modern *élégant*, from fish to flesh and back again, in the interest he took in the answer. "Is the danger pressing?"

"I'll no say just that; and I'll no say, just the contrary. There is always danger in war, and there is more of it at the advanced posts than at the main encampment. It ought, therefore, to occasion no surprise were we to be visited by the French, at any moment."

"And what the devil is to be done in that case?—Six men and two women would make but a poor job, in defending such a place as this, should the enemy invade us, as no doubt, Frenchman-like, they would take very good care to come strong-handed."

"That we may depend on. Some very formidable force, at the very lowest. A military disposition might be made, in defence of the island, out of all question, and according to the art of war, though we would probably fail in the force necessary to carry out the design, in any very creditable manner. In the first place, a detachment should be sent off to the shore, with orders to annoy the enemy in landing. A strong party ought instantly to be thrown into the block-house, as the citadel, for on that all the different detachments would naturally fall back for support, as the French advanced; and an entrenched camp might be laid out around the strong-hold, as it would be very unmilitary, indeed, to let the foe get near enough to the foot of the walls to mine them. Chevaux-de-frise would keep the cavalry in check, and as for the artillery, redoubts should be thrown up, under cover of yon woods. Strong skirmishing parties, moreover, would be exceedingly serviceable in retarding the march of the enemy; and these different huts, if properly picketed and ditched, would be converted into very eligible positions for that object."

"Whe-e-e-w! Quarter-Master. And who the d—l is to find all the men to carry out such a plan?"

"The King, out of all question, Master Cap. It is his quarrel, and it's just he should bear the burthen o' it."

"And we are only six! This is fine talking, with a vengeance. You could be sent down to the shore to oppose the landing, Mabel might skirmish with her tongue at least, the

soldier's wife might act *chevaux-de-frise*, to entangle the cavalry, the corporal should command the entrenched camp, his three men could occupy the five huts, and I would take the block-house. Whe-e-e-w, you describe well, Lieutenant, and should have been a limner instead of a soldier!"

"Na—I've been very literal and upright in my exposition of matters. That there is no greater force here to carry out the plan, is a fault of His Majesty's ministers, and none of mine."

"But should our enemy really appear," asked Mabel, with more interest than she might have shown, had she not remembered the guest in the hut, "what course ought we to pursue?"

"My advice would be to attempt to achieve that, pretty Mabel, which rendered Xenophon so justly celebrated."

"I think you mean a retreat, though I half guess at your allusion."

"You've imagined my meaning from the possession of a strong native sense, young lady. I am aware that your worthy father has pointed out to the corporal, certain modes and methods by which he fancies this island could be held, in case the French should discover its position; but the excellent serjeant, though your father, and as good a man in his duties as ever wielded a spontoon, is not the great Lord Stair, or even the Duke of Marlborough. I'll no deny the serjeant's merits, in his particular sphere, though I cannot exaggerate qualities, however excellent, into those of men who may be, in some trifling degree, his superiors. Serjeant Dunham has taken counsel of his heart, instead of his head, in resolving to issue such orders; but, if the fort fall, the blame will lie on him that ordered it to be occupied, and not on him whose duty it was to defend it. Whatever may be the determination of the latter, should the French and their allies land, a good commander never neglects the preparations necessary to effect a retreat; and I would advise Master Cap, who is the admiral of our navy, to have a boat in readiness to evacuate the island, if need comes to need. The largest boat that we have left, carries a very ample sail, and by hauling it round here, and mooring it under those bushes, there will be a convenient place for a hurried embarkation, and then you'll perceive, pretty Mabel, that it is scarce fifty yards

before we shall be in a channel between two other islands, and hid from the sight of those who may happen to be on this."

"All that you say, is very true, Mr. Muir; but may not the French come from that quarter themselves? If it is so good for a retreat, it is equally good for an advance."

"They'll no have the sense to do so discreet a thing," returned Muir, looking furtively and a little uneasily around him; "they'll no have sufficient discretion. Your French are a head-over-heels nation, and usually come forward in a random way; so, we may look for them, if they come at all, on the other side of the island."

The discourse now became exceedingly desultory, touching principally, however, on the probabilities of an invasion, and the best means of meeting it.

To most of this, Mabel paid but little attention, though she felt some surprise that Lieutenant Muir, an officer whose character for courage stood well, should openly recommend an abandonment of what appeared to her to be doubly a duty, her father's character being connected with the defence of the island. Her mind, however, was so much occupied with her guest, that, seizing the first favourable moment, she left the table, and was soon in her own hut again. Carefully fastening the door, and seeing that the simple curtain was drawn before the single little window, Mabel next led the Dew of June, or June, as she was familiarly termed by those who spoke to her in English, into the outer room, making signs of affection and confidence.

"I am glad to see you, June," said Mabel, with one of her sweetest smiles, and in her own winning voice; "very glad to see you—what has brought you hither, and how did you discover the island?"

"Speak slow," said June, returning smile for smile, and pressing the little hand she held, with one of her own, that was scarcely larger, though it had been hardened by labour, "more slow—too quick."

Mabel repeated her questions, endeavouring to repress the impetuosity of her feelings, and she succeeded in speaking so distinctly as to be understood.

"June, friend," returned the Indian woman.

"I believe you, June—from my soul I believe you; what has this to do with your visit?"

"Friend come to see friend," answered June, again smiling openly in the other's face.

"There is some other reason, June: else would you never run this risk, and alone—you are alone, June?"

"June wid you—no one else. June come alone—paddle canoe."

"I hope so—I think so—nay, I *know* so. You would not be treacherous with me, June?"

"What treacherous?"

"You would not betray me—would not give me to the French—to the Iroquois—to Arrowhead"—June shook her head earnestly,—“you would not sell my scalp?"

Here June passed her arm fondly around the slender waist of Mabel, and pressed her to her heart, with a tenderness and affection, that brought tears into the eyes of our heroine. It was done in the fond caressing manner of a woman, and it was scarcely possible that it should not obtain credit for sincerity, with a young and ingenuous person of the same sex. Mabel returned the pressure, and then held the other off at the length of her arm, looked her steadily in the face, and continued her inquiries.

"If June has something to tell her friend, let her speak plainly," she said. "My ears are open."

"June 'fraid Arrowhead kill her."

"But Arrowhead will never know it." Mabel's blood mounted to her temples; as she said this; for she felt that she was urging a wife to be treacherous to her husband. "That is, Mabel will not tell him."

"He bury tomahawk in June's head."

"That must never be, dear June; I would rather you should say no more, than run this risk."

"Block-house good place to sleep—good place to stay."

"Do you mean that I may save my life by keeping in the block-house, June? Surely, surely, Arrowhead will not hurt you for telling me that. He cannot wish me any great harm, for I never injured him."

"Arrowhead wish no harm to handsome pale-face," returned June, averting her face, and, though she always spoke in the soft, gentle voice of an Indian girl, permitting its notes to fall so low as to cause them to sound melancholy and timid,—“Arrowhead love pale-face girl."

Mabel blushed, she knew not why, and, for a moment, her questions were repressed by a feeling of inherent delicacy. But it was necessary to know more, for her apprehensions had been keenly awakened, and she resumed her inquiries.

"Arrowhead can have no reason to love, or to hate *me*," she said. "Is he near you?"

"Husband always near wife, here," said June, laying her hand on her heart.

"Excellent creature!—But, tell me June, ought I to keep in the block-house to-day—this morning—now?"

"Block-house very good; good for women. Block-house got no scalp."

"I fear I understand you only too well, June. Do you wish to see my father?"

"No here; gone away."

"You cannot know that, June; you see the island is full of his soldiers."

"No full; gone away,"—here June held up four of her fingers,—"*so many red-coats.*"

"And Pathfinder—would you not like to see the Pathfinder?—he can talk to you in the Iroquois tongue."

"Tongue gone wid him," said June, laughing; "*keep tongue in his mout.*"

There was something so sweet and contagious in the infantile laugh of an Indian girl, that Mabel could not refrain from joining in it, much as her fears were aroused by all that had passed.

"You appear to know, or to think you know, all about us, June. But, if Pathfinder be gone, Eau-douce can speak French, too. You know Eau-douce; shall I run and bring *him* to talk with you?"

"Eau-douce gone, too, all but heart; that there." As June said this, she laughed again, looked in different directions, as if unwilling to confuse the other, and laid her hand on Mabel's bosom.

Our heroine had often heard of the wonderful sagacity of the Indians, and of the surprising manner in which they noted all things, while they appeared to regard none, but she was scarce prepared for the direction the discourse had so singularly taken. Willing to change it, and, at the same time, truly anxious to learn how great the danger that impend-

ed over them might really be, she rose from the camp-stool, on which she had been seated, and, by assuming an attitude of less affectionate confidence, she hoped to hear more of that she really desired to learn, and to avoid allusions to that which she found so embarrassing.

"You know how much or how little you ought to tell me, June," she said, "and I hope you love me well enough to give me the information I ought to hear. My dear uncle, too, is on the island, and you are, or ought to be, his friend, as well as mine; and both of us will remember your conduct, when we get back to Oswego."

"Maybe never get back;—who know?" This was said doubtfully, or as one lays down an uncertain proposition, and not with a taunt, or a desire to alarm.

"No one knows what will happen, but God. Our lives are in his hands. Still I think you are to be his instrument in saving us."

This passed June's comprehension, and she only looked her ignorance, for it was evident she wished to be of use.

"Block-house very good," she repeated, as soon as her countenance ceased to express uncertainty, laying strong emphasis on the two last words.

"Well, I understand this, June, and will sleep in it to-night. Of course, I am to tell my uncle what you have said."

The Dew of June started, and she discovered a very manifest uneasiness, at the interrogatory.

"No—no—no—no"—she answered, with a volubility and vehemence that was imitated from the French of the Canadas, "no good to tell Salt-water. He much talk and long tongue. Thinks woods all water; understand not'ing. Tell Arrow-head, and June die."

"You do my dear uncle injustice, for he would be as little likely to betray you, as any one."

"No understand. Salt-water got tongue, but no eyes, no ears, no nose—not'ing but tongue, tongue, tongue."

Although Mabel did not exactly coincide in this opinion, she saw that Cap had not the confidence of the young Indian woman, and that it was idle to expect she would consent to his being admitted to their interview.

"You appear to think you know our situation pretty well,

June," Mabel continued—"have you been on the island before this visit?"

"Just come."

"How then do you know that what you say is true; my father, the Pathfinder and Eau-douce may all be here within sound of my voice, if I choose to call them."

"All gone," said June positively, smiling good-humouredly at the same time.

"Nay, this is more than you *can* say certainly, not having been over the island to examine it."

"Got good eyes; see boat with men go away—see ship with Eau-douce."

"Then you have been some time watching us.—I think, however, you have not counted them that remain."

June laughed, held up her four fingers again, and then pointed to her two thumbs—passing a finger over the first, she repeated the words "red-coats," and touching the last, she added—"Salt-water," "Quarter-Master." All this was being very accurate, and Mabel began to entertain serious doubts of the propriety of her permitting her visiter to depart without her becoming more explicit. Still it was so repugnant to her feelings to abuse the confidence this gentle and affectionate creature had evidently reposed in her, that Mabel had no sooner admitted the thought of summoning her uncle, than she rejected it, as unworthy of herself, and unjust to her friend. To aid this good resolution, too, there was the certainty that June would reveal nothing, but take refuge in a stubborn silence, if any attempt was made to coerce her.

"You think, then, June," Mabel continued, as soon as these thoughts had passed through her mind, "that I had better live in the block-house?"

"Good place for woman. Block-house got no scalp. Logs t'ick."

"You speak confidently, June, as if you had been in it, and had measured its walls."

June laughed, and she looked knowing, though she said nothing.

"Does any one but yourself know how to find this island—have any of the Iroquois seen it?"

June looked sad, and she cast her eyes warily about her, as if distrusting a listener.

"Tuscarora everywhere—Oswego, here, Frontenac, Mohawk—everywhere. If he see June, kill her."

"But we thought that no one knew of this island, and that we had no reason to fear our enemies while on it."

"Much eye, Iroquois."

"Eyes will not always do, June.—This spot is hid from ordinary sight, and few of even our own people know how to find it."

"One man can tell—some Yengeese talk French."

Mabel felt a chill at her heart. All the suspicions against Jasper, which she had hitherto disdained entertaining, crowded in a body on her thoughts, and the sensation that they brought was so sickening, that for an instant she imagined she was about to faint. Arousing herself, and remembering her promise to her father, she arose and walked up and down the hut for a minute, fancying that Jasper's delinquencies were naught to her, though her inmost heart yearned with the desire to think him innocent.

"I understand your meaning, June," she then said—"You wish me to know that some one has treacherously told your people where and how to find the island."

June laughed, for in her eyes artifice in war was oftener a merit than a crime; but she was too true to her tribe herself, to say more than the occasion required. Her object was to save Mabel, and Mabel only, and she saw no sufficient reason for "travelling out of the record," as the lawyers express it, in order to do any thing else.

"Pale-face know now—" she added—"Block-house good for girl—no matter for men and warriors."

"But it is much matter with me, June, for one of these men is my uncle, whom I love, and the others are my countrymen and friends. I must tell them what has passed."

"Then June be kill"—returned the young Indian quietly, though she evidently spoke with concern.

"No—they shall not know that you have been here. Still, they must be on their guard, and we can all go into the block-house."

"Arrowhead know—see every thing, and June be kill. June come to tell young pale-face friend, not to tell men. Every warrior watch his own scalp. June woman, and tell woman; no tell men."

Mabel was greatly distressed at this declaration of her wild friend, for it was now evident the young creature understood that her communication was to go no farther. She was ignorant how far these people considered the point of honour interested in her keeping the secret; and, most of all, was she unable to say how far any indiscretion of her own might actually commit June, and endanger her life. All these considerations flashed on her mind, and reflection only rendered their influence more painful. June, too, manifestly viewed the matter gravely, for she began to gather up the different little articles she had dropped, in taking Mabel's hand, and was preparing to depart. To attempt detaining her was out of the question, and to part from her, after all she had hazarded to serve her, was repugnant to all the just and kind feelings of our heroine's nature.

"June," she said eagerly, folding her arms round the gentle, but uneducated being, "we are friends. From me you have nothing to fear, for no one shall know of your visit. If you could give me some signal just before the danger comes, some sign by which to know when to go into the block-house, —how to take care of myself."

June paused, for she had been in earnest in her intention to depart; and then she said quietly—

"Bring June pigeon."

"A pigeon! Where shall I find a pigeon to bring you?"

"Next hut—bring old one—June go to canoe."

"I think I understand you, June; but had I not better lead you back to the bushes, lest you meet some of the men?"

"Go out first—count men—one—two—t'ree—four—five—six"—here June held up her fingers, and laughed—"all out of way—good—all but one—call him one side. Then sing, and fetch pigeon."

Mabel smiled at the readiness and ingenuity of the girl, and prepared to execute her requests. At the door, however, she stopped, and looked back entreatingly at the Indian woman.

"Is there no hope of your telling me more, June?" she said.

"Know all now—block-house good—pigeon tell—Arrow-head kill."

The last words sufficed; for Mabel could not urge further communications, when her companion herself told her, that

the penalty of her revelations might be death by the hand of her husband. Throwing open the door, she made a sign of adieu to June, and went out of the hut. Mabel resorted to the simple expedient of the young Indian girl, to ascertain the situation of the different individuals on the island. Instead of looking about her with the intention of recognizing faces and dresses, she merely counted them; and found that three still remained at the fire, while two had gone to the boat, one of whom was Mr. Muir. The sixth man was her uncle; and he was coolly arranging some fishing tackle, at no great distance from the fire. The woman was just entering her own hut; and this accounted for the whole party. Mabel now, affecting to have dropped something, returned nearly to the hut she had left, warbling an air, stooped as if to pick up some object from the ground, and hurried towards the hut June had mentioned. This was a dilapidated structure, and it had been converted, by the soldiers of the last detachment, into a sort of store-house for their live stock. Among other things, it contained a few dozen pigeons, which were regaling on a pile of wheat, that had been brought off from one of the farms plundered on the Canada shore. Mabel had not much difficulty in catching one of these pigeons, although they fluttered and flew about the hut, with a noise like that of drums; and, concealing it in her dress, she stole back towards her own hut with the prize. It was empty; and, without doing more than cast a glance in at the door, the eager girl hurried down to the shore. She had no difficulty in escaping observation, for the trees and bushes made a complete cover to her person. At the canoe, she found June; who took the pigeon, placed it in a basket of her own manufacturing, and repeating the words, "block-house good," she glided out of the bushes, and across the narrow passage, as noiselessly as she had come. Mabel waited some time to catch a signal of leave-taking or amity, after her friend had landed; but none was given. The adjacent islands, without exception, were as quiet as if no one had ever disturbed the sublime repose of nature; and nowhere could any sign or symptom be discovered, as Mabel then thought, that might denote the proximity of the sort of danger of which June had given notice.

On returning, however, from the shore, Mabel was struck

with a little circumstance, that, in an ordinary situation, would have attracted no attention, but which, now that her suspicions had been aroused, did not pass before her uneasy eye unnoticed. A small piece of red bunting, such as is used in the ensigns of ships, was fluttering at the lower branch of a small tree, fastened in a way to permit it to blow out, or to droop like a vessel's pennant.

Now that Mabel's fears were awakened, June herself could not have manifested greater quickness in analyzing facts that she believed might affect the safety of the party. She saw at a glance, that this bit of cloth could be observed from an adjacent island; that it lay so near the line between her own hut and the canoe, as to leave no doubt that June had passed near it, if not directly under it; and that it might be a signal to communicate some important fact connected with the mode of attack, to those who were probably lying in ambush near them. Tearing the little strip of bunting from the tree, Mabel hastened on, scarce knowing what her duty next required of her. June might be false to her; but her manner, her looks, her affection, and her disposition as Mabel had known it in the journey, forbade the idea. Then came the allusion to Arrowhead's admiration of the pale-face beauties, some dim recollections of the looks of the Tuscarora, and a painful consciousness that few wives could view with kindness one who had estranged a husband's affections. None of these images were distinct and clear, but they rather gleamed over the mind of our heroine than rested in it, and they quickened her pulses, as they did her step, without bringing with them the prompt and clear decisions that usually followed her reflections. She had hurried onwards towards the hut occupied by the soldier's wife, intending to remove at once to the block-house, with the woman, though she could persuade no other to follow, when her impatient walk was interrupted by the voice of Muir.

"Whither so fast, pretty Mabel," he cried, "and why so given to solitude?—the worthy serjeant will deride my breeding, if he hear that his daughter passes the mornings alone and unattended to, though he well knows that it is my ardent wish to be her slave and companion, from the beginning of the year to its end."

"Surely, Mr. Muir, you must have some authority here,"

Mabel suddenly arrested her steps to say. "One of your rank would be listened to, at least, by a corporal!"

"I don't know that—I don't know that,"—interrupted Muir, with an impatience and appearance of alarm that might have excited Mabel's attention at another moment. "Command is command, discipline, discipline, and authority, authority. Your good father would be sore grieved did he find me interfering to sully, or carry off the laurels he is about to win; and I cannot command the corporal, without equally commanding the serjeant. The wisest way will be for me to remain in the obscurity of a private individual in this enterprise; and it is so that all parties, from Lundie down, understand the transaction."

"This I know, and it may be well; nor would I give my dear father any cause of complaint, but you may influence the corporal to his own good."

"I'll no say that," returned Muir, in his sly Scotch way;—"it would be far safer to promise to influence him to his injury. Mankind, pretty Mabel, have their peculiarities, and to influence a fellow-being to his own good, is one of the most difficult tasks of human nature, while the opposite is just the easiest. You'll no forget this, my dear; but bear it in mind for your edification and government; but, what is that you're twisting round your slender finger, as you may be said to twist hearts?"

"It is nothing but a bit of cloth—a sort of flag—a trifle that is hardly worth our attention at this grave moment—If"—

"A trifle! It's no so trifling as ye may imagine, Mistress Mabel," taking the bit of bunting from her, and stretching it at full length with both his arms extended, while his face grew grave, and his eye watchful. "Ye'll no ha' been finding this, Mabel Dunham, in the breakfast?"

Mabel simply acquainted him with the spot where, and the manner in which he had found the bit of cloth. While she was speaking, the eye of the Quarter-Master was not quiet for a moment, glancing from the rag to the face of our heroine, then back again to the rag. That his suspicions were awakened was easy to be seen, nor was he long in letting it be known what direction they had taken.

"We are not in a part of the world, where our ensigns
Vol. II. — 9

and gauds ought to be spread abroad to the wind, Mabel Dunham!" he said, with an ominous shake of the head.

"I thought as much myself, Mr. Muir, and brought away the little flag, lest it might be the means of betraying our presence here, to the enemy, even though nothing is intended by its display. Ought not my uncle to be made acquainted with the circumstance?"

"I no see the necessity for that, pretty Mabel, for as you justly say it is a circumstance, and circumstances sometimes worry the worthy mariner. But this flag, if flag it can be called, belongs to a seaman's craft. You may perceive that it is made of what is called bunting, and that is a description of cloth used only by vessels for such purposes, *our* colours being of silk, as you may understand, or painted canvass. It's surprisingly like the fly of the Scud's ensign! And now I recollect me, to have observed that a piece had been cut from that very flag!"

Mabel felt her heart sink, but she had sufficient self-command not to attempt an answer.

"It must be looked to," Muir continued, "and after all, I think it may be well to hold a short consultation with Master Cap, than whom a more loyal subject does not exist in the British Empire."

"I have thought the warning so serious," Mabel rejoined, "that I am about to remove to the block-house, and to take the woman with me."

"I do not see the prudence of that, Mabel. The block-house will be the first spot assailed, should there really be an attack; and it's no well provided for a siege, that must be allowed. If I might advise in so delicate a contingency, I would recommend your taking refuge in the boat, which, as you may now perceive, is most favourably placed to retreat by that channel opposite, where all in it would be hid by the islands, in one or two minutes. Water leaves no trail, as Pathfinder well expresses it, and there appears to be so many different passages in that quarter, that escape would be more than probable. I've always been of opinion that Lundie hazarded too much, in occupying a post as far advanced, and as much exposed, as this."

"It's too late to regret it now, Mr. Muir, and we have only to consult our own security."

"And the King's honour, pretty Mabel. Yes, His Majesty's arms, and his glorious name, are not to be overlooked on any occasion."

"Then I think it might be better, if we all turned our eyes towards the place that has been built to maintain them, instead of the boat," said Mabel, smiling; "and so, Mr. Muir, I am for the block-house, with a disposition to await there the return of my father, and his party. He would be sadly grieved, at finding we had fled, when he got back, successful himself, and filled with the confidence of our having been as faithful to our duties, as he has been to his own."

"Nay, nay, for Heaven's sake, do not misunderstand me, Mabel," Muir interrupted with some alarm of manner, "I am far from intimating that any but you females ought to take refuge in the boat. The duty of us men is sufficiently plain no doubt, and my resolution has been formed from the first, to stand or fall by the block-house."

"And did you imagine, Mr. Muir, that two females could row that heavy boat, in a way to escape the bark canoe of an Indian?"

"Ah! my pretty Mabel, love is seldom logical, and its fears and misgivings are apt to warp the faculties. I only saw your sweet person in possession of the means of safety, and overlooked the want of ability to use them. But you'll no be so cruel, lovely creature, as to impute to me as a fault, my intense anxiety on your own account!"

Mabel had heard enough. Her mind was too much occupied with what had passed that morning, and with her fears, to wish to linger further to listen to love speeches, that, in her most joyous and buoyant moments, she would have found unpleasant. She took a hasty leave of her companion, and was about to trip away towards the hut of the other woman, when Muir arrested the movement, by laying a hand on her arm.

"One word, Mabel," he said, "before you leave me. This little flag may, or it may not have a particular meaning; if it has, now that we are aware of its being shown, may it not be better to put it back again, while we watch vigilantly for some answer, that may betray the conspiracy; and if it mean nothing, why nothing will follow."

"This may be all right, Mr. Muir, though if the whole is

accidental, the flag might be the occasion of the fort's being discovered."

Mabel stayed to utter no more, but she was soon out of sight, running into the hut towards which she had been first proceeding. The Quarter-Master remained on the very spot, and in the precise attitude in which she had left him, for quite a minute, first looking at the bounding figure of the girl, and then at the bit of bunting, which he still held before him, in a way to denote indecision. His irresolution lasted but for this minute, however, for he was soon beneath the tree, where he fastened the mimic flag to a branch, again, though from his ignorance of the precise spot from which it had been taken by Mabel, he left it fluttering from a part of the oak, where it was still more exposed than before, to the eyes of any passenger on the river, though less in view from the island, itself.

CHAPTER VI.

"Each one has had his supping mess,
The cheese is put into the press,
The pans and bowls clean scalded all,
Rear'd up against the milk-house wall."

COTTON.

It seemed strange to Mabel Dunham, as she passed along on her way to find her female companion, that others should be so composed, while she, herself, felt as if the responsibilities of life and death rested on her shoulders. It is true, that distrust of June's motives mingled with her forebodings; but when she came to recall the affectionate and natural manner of the young Indian girl, and all the evidences of good faith and sincerity that she had seen in her conduct, during the familiar intercourse of their journey, she rejected the idea, with the unwillingness of a generous disposition, to believe ill of others. She saw, however, that she could not put her companions properly on their guard, without letting them into the secret of her conference with June, and she found

herself compelled to act cautiously, and with a forethought to which she was unaccustomed, more especially in a matter of so much moment.

The soldier's wife was told to transport the necessaries into the block-house, and admonished not to be far from it, at any time, during the day. Mabel did not explain her reasons. She merely stated that she had detected some signs in walking about the island, that induced her to apprehend that the enemy had more knowledge of its position, than had been previously believed, and that they two, at least, would do well to be in readiness to seek a refuge at the shortest notice. It was not difficult to arouse the apprehension of this person, who, though a stout-hearted Scotch woman, was ready enough to listen to any thing that confirmed her dread of Indian cruelties. As soon as Mabel believed that her companion was sufficiently frightened to make her wary, she threw out some hints, touching the inexpediency of letting the soldiers know the extent of their own fears. This was done with a view to prevent discussions and inquiries that might embarrass our heroine; she determining to render her uncle, the corporal, and his men, more cautious, by adopting a different course. Unfortunately, the British army could not have furnished a worse person, for the particular duty that he was now required to discharge, than Corporal McNab, the individual who had been left in command during the absence of Serjeant Dunham. On the one hand he was resolute, prompt, familiar with all the details of a soldier's life, and used to war; on the other, he was supercilious as regards the provincials, opinionated on every subject connected with the narrow limits of his professional practice, much disposed to fancy the British empire the centre of all that is excellent in the world, and Scotland, the focus of, at least, all moral excellence in that empire. In short, he was an epitome, though on a scale suited to his rank, of those very qualities, which were so peculiar to the servants of the crown, that were sent into the colonies, as these servants estimated themselves in comparison with the natives of the country; or, in other words, he considered the American as an animal inferior to the parent stock, and viewed all his notions of military service, in particular, as undigested and absurd. Braddock, himself, was not less disposed to take advice from a

provincial, than his humble imitator ; and he had been known, on more than one occasion, to demur to the directions and orders of two or three commissioned officers of the corps, who happened to be born in America, simply for that reason ; taking care, at the same time, with true Scottish wariness, to protect himself from the pains and penalties of positive disobedience. A more impracticable subject, therefore, could not well have offered for the purpose of Mabel, and yet she felt obliged to lose no time in putting her plan in execution.

“ My father has left you a responsible command, corporal,” she said, as soon as she could catch McNab, a little apart from the rest of the soldiers ; “ for should the island fall into the hands of the enemy, not only would we be captured, but the party that is now out, would in all probability become their prisoners also.”

“ It needs no journey from Scotland to this place, to know the facts needful to be o’ that way of thinking,” returned McNab, drily.

“ I do not doubt your understanding it, as well as myself, Mr. McNab ; but I’m fearful that you veterans, accustomed as you are to dangers and battles, are a little apt to overlook some of the precautions that may be necessary in a situation as peculiar as ours.”

“ They say Scotland is no conquered country, young woman, but I’m thinking there must be some mistak’ in the matter, as we, her children, are so drowsy-headed, and apt to be o’ertaken when we least expect it.”

“ Nay, my good friend, you mistake my meaning. In the first place, I’m not thinking of Scotland at all, but of this island ; and then I am far from doubting your vigilance when you think it necessary to practise it ; but my great fear is that there may be danger to which your courage will make you indifferent.”

“ My courage, Mistress Dunham, is doubtless of a very poor quality, being nothing but Scottish courage ; your father’s is Yankee, and were he here amang us, we should see different preparations beyond a doubt. Well, times are getting wrang, when foreigners hold commissions and carry halberds in Scottish corps ; and I no wonder that battles are lost, and campaigns go wrang end foremost.”

Mabel was almost in despair, but the quiet warning of

June was still too vividly impressed on her mind, to allow her to yield the matter. She changed her mode of operating, therefore, still clinging to the hope of getting the whole party within the block-house, without being compelled to betray the source whence she obtained her notices of the necessity of vigilance.

"I dare say you are right, Corporal McNab," she observed, "for I've often heard of the heroes of your country, who have been among the first of the civilized world, if what they tell me of them is true."

"Have you read the history of Scotland, Mistress Dunham?" demanded the corporal, looking up at his pretty companion, for the first time, with something like a smile on his hard, repulsive countenance.

"I have read a little of it, corporal, but I've heard much more. The lady who brought me up had Scottish blood in her veins, and was fond of the subject."

"I'll warrant ye, the serjeant no troubled himself to expatiate on the renown of the country where his regiment was raised?"

"My father has other things to think of, and the little I know, was got from the lady I have mentioned."

"She'll no be forgetting to tall ye o' Wallace?"

"Of him, I've even read a good deal."

"And o' Bruce—and the affair o' Bannock-burn?"

"Of that too, as well as of Culloden-muir."

The last of these battles was then a recent event, it having actually been fought within the recollection of our heroine, whose notions of it, however, were so confused that she scarcely appreciated the effect her allusion might produce on her companion. She knew it had been a victory, and had often heard the guests of her patroness mention it with triumph; and she fancied their feelings would find a sympathetic chord in those of every British soldier. Unfortunately, McNab had fought throughout that luckless day, on the side of the Pretender; and a deep scar, that garnished his face, had been left there, by the sabre of a German soldier, in the service of the House of Hanover. He fancied that his wound bled afresh, at Mabel's allusion; and it is certain that the blood rushed to his face in a torrent, as if it would pour out of his skin at the cicatrix.

"Hoot! hoot awa'!" he fairly shouted, "with your Cul-loden and Sherrif-muirs, young woman; ye'll no be understanding the subject at all, and will manifest not only wisdom, but modesty, in speaking o' your ain country and its many failings. King George has some loyal subjects in the colonies, na doubt; but 't will be a lang time bafore he sees or hears any guid of them."

Mabel was surprised at the corporal's heat, for she had not the smallest idea where the shoe pinched; but she was determined not to give up the point.

"I've always heard that the Scotch had two of the good qualities of soldiers," she said, "courage and circumspection; and I feel persuaded that Corporal McNab will sustain the national renown."

"Ask ye'r own father, Mistress Dunham: he is acquaint' with Corporal McNab, and will no be backward to point out his demerits. We have been in battle the'gither, and he is my superior officer, and has a sort o' official right to give the characters of his subordinates."

"My father thinks well of you, McNab, or he would not have left you in charge of this island and all it contains, his own daughter included. Among other things, I well know that he calculates largely on your prudence. He expects the block-house, in particular, to be strictly attended to."

"If he wishes to defend the honour of the 55th behind logs, he ought to have remained in command himsal'; for, to speak frankly, it goes against a Scotsman's bluid and opinions, to be beaten out of the field even before he is attacked. We are broad-sword men, and love to stand foot to foot with the foe. This American mode of fighting, that is getting into so much favour, will destroy the reputation of His Majesty's army, if it no destroy its spirit."

"No true soldier despises caution. Even Major Duncan, himself, than whom there is none braver, is celebrated for his care of his men."

"Lundie has his weakness, and is fast forgetting the broad-sword and open heaths, in his tree and rifle practice. But, Mistress Dunham, tak' the word of an old soldier, who has seen his fifty-fifth year, when he talls ye, that there is no surer method to encourage your enemy, than to seem to fear him; and that there is no danger in this Indian warfare, that

the fancies and imaginations of your Americans have not augmented and enlarged upon, until they see a savage in every bush. We Scots come from a naked region, and have no need, and less relish, for covers, and so ye'll be seeing, Mistress Dunham"—

The corporal gave a spring into the air, fell forward on his face, and rolled over on his back—the whole passing so suddenly, that Mabel had scarcely heard the sharp crack of the rifle that had sent a bullet through his body. Our heroine did not shriek—did not even tremble; for the occurrence was too sudden, too awful, and too unexpected for that exhibition of weakness: on the contrary, she stepped hastily forward, with a natural impulse to aid her companion. There was just enough of life left in McNab to betray his entire consciousness of all that had passed. His countenance had the wild look of one who had been overtaken by death, by surprise; and Mabel, in her cooler moments, fancied that it showed the tardy repentance of a wilful and obstinate sinner.

"Ye'll be getting into the block-house, as fast as possible;" McNab whispered, as Mabel leaned over him, to catch his dying words.

Then came over our heroine the full consciousness of her situation, and of the necessity of exertion. She cast a rapid glance at the body at her feet, saw that it had ceased to breathe, and fled. It was but a few minutes' run to the block-house, the door of which Mabel had barely gained, when it was closed violently in her face, by Jennie, the soldier's wife, who, in blind terror, thought only of her own safety. The reports of five or six rifles were heard while Mabel was calling out for admittance; and the additional terror they produced, prevented the woman within from undoing quickly the very fastenings she had been so expert in applying. After a minute's delay, however, Mabel found the door reluctantly yielding to her constant pressure, and she forced her slender body through the opening, the instant it was large enough to allow of its passage. By this time, Mabel's heart ceased to beat tumultuously, and she gained sufficient self-command to act collectedly. Instead of yielding to the almost convulsive efforts of her companion to close the door again, she held it open long enough to ascertain that none of her own

party was in sight, or likely, on the instant, to endeavour to gain admission; then she allowed the opening to be shut. Her orders and proceedings now became more calm and rational. But a single bar was crossed, and Jennie was directed to stand in readiness to remove even that, at any application from a friend. She then ascended the ladder to the room above, where, by means of a loop-hole, she was enabled to get as good a view of the island as the surrounding bushes would allow. Admonishing her associate below to be firm and steady, she made as careful an examination of the environs as her situation permitted.

To her great surprise, Mabel could not, at first, see a living soul on the island, friend or enemy. Neither Frenchman nor Indian was visible, though a small straggling white cloud that was floating before the wind, told her in which quarter she ought to look for them. The rifles had been discharged from the direction of the island whence June had come, though whether the enemy were on that island, or had actually landed on her own, Mabel could not say. Going to the loop that commanded a view of the spot where McNab lay, her blood curdled at perceiving all three of his soldiers lying apparently lifeless at his side. These men had rushed to a common centre, at the first alarm, and had been shot down almost simultaneously by the invisible foe, whom the corporal had affected to despise.

Neither Cap nor Lieutenant Muir was to be seen. With a beating heart, Mabel examined every opening through the trees, and ascended even to the upper story, or garret of the block-house, where she got a full view of the whole island, so far as its covers would allow; but with no better success. She had expected to see the body of her uncle lying on the grass, like those of the soldiers, but it was nowhere visible. Turning towards the spot where the boat lay, Mabel saw that it was still fastened to the shore; and then she supposed that, by some accident, Muir had been prevented from effecting his retreat in that quarter. In short, the island lay in the quiet of the grave, the bodies of the soldiers rendering the scene as fearful as it was extraordinary.

"For God's holy sake, Mistress Mabel," called out the woman from below, for, though her fear had got to be too ungovernable to allow her to keep silence, our heroine's superior

refinement, more than the regimental station of her father, still controlled her mode of address; "for His holy sake! Mistress Mabel, tell me if any of our friends are living? I think I hear groans that grow fainter and fainter, and fear that they will all be tomahawked!"

Mabel now remembered that one of the soldiers was this woman's husband, and she trembled at what might be the immediate effect of her sorrow, should his death become suddenly known to her. The groans, too, gave a little hope, though she feared they might come from her uncle, who lay out of view.

"We are in his holy keeping, Jennie," she answered. "We must trust in Providence, while we neglect none of its benevolent means of protecting ourselves. Be careful with the door; on no account open it, without my directions."

"Oh! tell me, Mistress Mabel, if you can anywhere see Sandy?—If I could only let him know that I'm in safety, the good man would be easier in his mind, whether free or a prisoner!"

Sandy was Jennie's husband, and he lay dead in plain view of the loop, from which our heroine was then looking.

"You no tell me if you're seeing of Sandy," the woman repeated from below, impatient at Mabel's silence.

"There are some of our people gathered about the body of McNab," was the answer, for it seemed sacrilegious in her eyes to tell a direct untruth, under the awful circumstances in which she was placed.

"Is Sandy among them?" demanded the woman, in a voice that sounded appalling by its hoarseness and energy.

"He may be certainly—for I see, one, two, three, four, and all in the scarlet coats of the regiment."

"Sandy!" called out the woman frantically—"why d'ye no care for yoursal', Sandy? Come hither the instant, man, and share your wife's fortunes, in weal or woe. It's no a moment for your silly discipline, and vainglorious notions of honour! Sandy!—Sandy!"

Mabel heard the bar turn, and then the door creaked on its hinges. Expectation, not to say terror, held her in suspense at the loop, and she soon beheld Jennie rushing through the bushes, in the direction of the cluster of dead. It took the woman but an instant to reach the fatal spot. So sudden

and unexpected had been the blow, that she, in her terror, did not appear to comprehend its weight. Some wild and half-frantic notion of a deception troubled her fancy, and she imagined that the men were trifling with her fears. She took her husband's hand, and it was still warm, while she thought a covert smile was struggling on his lip.

"Why will ye fool life away, Sandy?" she cried, pulling at the arm. "Ye'll all be murdered by these accursed Indians, and you no takin' to the block like trusty soldiers! Awa'!—awa', and no be losing the precious moments."

In her desperate efforts, the woman pulled the body of her husband in a way to cause the head to turn completely over, when the small hole in the temple, caused by the entrance of a rifle bullet, and a few drops of blood trickling over the skin, revealed the meaning of her husband's silence. As the horrid truth flashed, in its full extent, on her mind, the woman clasped her hands, gave a shriek that pierced the glades of every island near, and fell at length on the dead body of the soldier. Thrilling, heart-reaching, appalling as was that shriek, it was melody to the cry that followed it so quickly as to blend the sounds. The terrific war-whoop arose out of the covers of the island, and some twenty savages, horrible in their paint, and the other devices of Indian ingenuity, rushed forward, eager to secure the coveted scalps. Arrowhead was foremost, and it was his tomahawk that brained the insensible Jennie, and her reeking hair was hanging at his girdle as a trophy, in less than two minutes after she had quitted the block-house. His companions were equally active, and McNab and his soldiers no longer presented the quiet aspect of men who slumbered. They were left in their gore, unequivocally butchered corpses.

All this passed in much less time than has been required to relate it, and all this did Mabel witness. She had stood riveted to the spot, gazing on the whole horrible scene, as if enchained by some charm, nor did the idea of self, or of her own danger, once obtrude itself on her thoughts. But no sooner did she perceive the place where the men had fallen, covered with savages, exulting in the success of their surprise, than it occurred to her, that Jennie had left the block-house door unbarred. Her heart beat violently, for that defence alone stood between her and immediate death, and she

sprang toward the ladder, with the intention of descending to make sure of it. Her foot had not yet reached the floor of the second story, however, when she heard the door grating on its hinges, and she gave herself up for lost. Sinking on her knees, the terrified but courageous girl, endeavoured to prepare herself for death, and to raise her thoughts to God. The instinct of life, however, was too strong for prayer, and while her lips moved, the jealous senses watched every sound beneath. When her ears heard the bars, which went on pivots, secured to the centre of the door, turning into their fastenings, not one, as she, herself, had directed, with a view to admit her uncle, should he apply, but all three, she started again to her feet, all spiritual contemplations vanishing in her actual temporal condition, and it seemed as if all her faculties were absorbed in the sense of hearing.

The thoughts are active, in a moment so fearful. At first Mabel fancied that her uncle had entered the block-house, and she was about to descend the ladder and throw herself into his arms; then the idea that it might be an Indian, who had barred the door to shut out intruders, while he plundered at leisure, arrested the movement. The profound stillness below, was unlike the bold, restless movements of Cap, and it seemed to savour more of the artifices of an enemy; if a friend, at all, it could only be her uncle, or the Quarter-Master; for the horrible conviction now presented itself to our heroine, that to these two, and herself, were the whole party suddenly reduced, if, indeed, the two latter survived. This consideration held Mabel in check, and for quite two minutes more, a breathless silence reigned in the building. During this time, the girl stood at the foot of the upper ladder, the trap which led to the lower opening on the opposite side of the floor; the eyes of Mabel were riveted on this spot, for she now began to expect to see, at each instant, the horrible sight of a savage face at the hole. This apprehension soon became so intense, that she looked about her for a place of concealment. The procrastination of the catastrophe she now fully expected, though it were only for a moment, afforded a relief. The room contained several barrels, and behind two of these, Mabel crouched, placing her eyes at an opening by which she could still watch the trap. She made another effort to pray, but the moment was too horrible for

that relief. She thought, too, that she heard a low rustling, as if one were ascending the lower ladder, with an effort at caution, so great, as to betray itself by its own excess; then followed a creaking, that she was certain came from one of the steps of the ladder, which had made the same noise, under her own light weight, as she ascended. This was one of those instants, into which are compressed the sensations of years of ordinary existence.—Life, death, eternity, and extreme bodily pain, were all standing out in bold relief, from the plane of every-day occurrences; and she might have been taken, at that moment, for a beautiful, pallid representation of herself, equally without motion, and without vitality. But, while such was the outward appearance of the form, never had there been a time, in her brief career, when Mabel heard more acutely, saw more clearly, or felt more vividly. As yet, nothing was visible at the trap; but her ears, rendered exquisitely sensitive by intense feeling, distinctly acquainted her that some one was within a few inches of the opening in the floor: next followed the evidence of her eyes, which beheld the dark hair of an Indian rising so slowly through the passage, that the movements of the head might be likened to that of the minute-hand of a clock; then came the dark skin and wild features, until the whole of the swarthy face had risen above the floor. The human countenance seldom appears to advantage, when partially concealed, and Mabel imagined many additional horrors, as she first saw the black, roving eyes, and the expression of wildness, as the savage countenance was revealed, as it might be, inch by inch; but, when the entire head was raised above the floor, a second and a better look, assured our heroine that she saw the gentle, anxious, and even handsome, face of June.

CHAPTER VII.

“—Spectre though I be,
I am not sent to scare thee or deceive;
But in reward of thy fidelity.”

WORDSWORTH.

It would be difficult to say which evinced the most satisfaction, when Mabel sprang to her feet and appeared in the centre of the room,—our heroine on finding that her visiter was the wife of Arrowhead, and not Arrowhead himself, or June, at discovering that her advice had been followed, and that the block-house contained the person she had so anxiously and almost hopelessly sought. They embraced each other, and the unsophisticated Tuscarora woman laughed in her sweet accents, as she held her friend at arm's-length, and made certain of her presence.

“Block-house, good,” said the young Indian—“got no scalp.”

“It is, indeed, good, June,” Mabel answered with a shudder, veiling her eyes at the same time, as if to shut out a view of the horrors she had so lately witnessed. “Tell me, for God's sake! if you know what has become of my dear uncle?—I have looked in all directions, without being able to see him.”

“No here, in block-house?” June asked, with some curiosity.

“Indeed he is not—I am quite alone in this place; Jennie, the woman, who was with me, having rushed out to join her husband, and perishing for her imprudence.”

“June know—June see; very bad, Arrowhead no feel for any wife—no feel for his own.”

“Ah! June; your life, at least, is safe!”

“Don't know—Arrowhead kill me, if he know all.”

“God bless and protect you, June—he *will* bless and protect you for this humanity. Tell me what is to be done, and if my poor uncle is still living?”

“Don't know. Salt-water has boat; maybe he go on river.”

"The boat is still on the shore, but neither my uncle nor the Quarter-Master is anywhere to be seen."

"No kill, or June would see. Hide away! Red man hide; no shame for pale-face."

"It is not the shame that I fear for them, but the opportunity. Your attack was awfully sudden, June!"

"Tuscarora!" returned the other, smiling with exultation at the dexterity of her husband. "Arrowhead great warrior!"

"You are too good and gentle for this sort of life, June; you *cannot* be happy in such scenes!"

June's countenance grew clouded, and Mabel fancied there was some of the savage fire of a chief in her frown as she answered:

"Yengeese too greedy—take away all hunting grounds—chase Six Nation from morning to night; wicked king—wicked people. Pale-face very bad."

Mabel knew that, even in that distant day, there was much truth in this opinion, though she was too well instructed not to understand that the monarch, in this as in a thousand other cases, was blamed for acts of which he was most probably ignorant. She felt the justice of the rebuke, therefore, too much to attempt an answer, and her thoughts naturally reverted to her own situation.

"And what am I to do, June?" she demanded. "It can not be long before your people will assault this building."

"Block-house good—got no scalp."

"But they will soon discover that it has got no garrison, too, if they do not know it already. You, yourself, told me the number of people that were on the island, and doubtless you learned it from Arrowhead."

"Arrowhead know," answered June, holding up six fingers to indicate the number of the men. "All red men know. Four lose scalp already—two got 'em, yet!"

"Do not speak of it, June; the horrid thought curdles my blood. Your people cannot know that I am alone in the block-house, but may fancy my uncle and the Quarter-Master with me, and may set fire to the building, in order to dislodge them. They tell me that fire is the great danger to such places."

"No burn block-house," said June, quietly.

"You cannot know that, my good June, and I have no means to keep them off."

"No burn block-house. Block-house good; got no scalp."

"But tell me why, June; I fear they will burn it!"

"Block-house wet—much rain—logs green—no burn easy. Red man know it—fine t'ing—then no burn it to tell Yengeese that Iroquois been here. Fader come back, miss block-house, no found. No, no; Indian too much cunning; no touch any thing."

"I understand you, June, and hope your prediction may be true; for as regards my dear father, should he escape—perhaps he is already dead, or captured, June?"

"No touch fader—don't know where he gone—water got no trail—red man can't follow. No burn block-house—block-house good—got no scalp."

"Do you think it possible for me to remain here, safely, until my father returns?"

"Don't know—daughter tell best, when fader come back."

Mabel felt uneasy at the glance of June's dark eye, as she uttered this, for the unpleasant surmise arose that her companion was endeavouring to discover a fact that might be useful to her own people, while it would lead to the destruction of her parent and his party. She was about to make an evasive answer, when a heavy push at the outer door, suddenly drew all her thoughts to the immediate danger.

"They come!" she exclaimed,—“perhaps, June, it is my uncle, or the Quarter-Master. I cannot keep out even Mr. Muir at a moment like this.”

"Why no look—plenty loop-hole—made purpose."

Mabel took the hint, and going to one of the downward loops, that had been cut through the logs in the part that overhung the basement, she cautiously raised the little block that ordinarily filled the small hole, and caught a glance at what was passing at the door. The start and changing countenance told her companion that some of her own people were below.

"Red man," said June, lifting a finger in admonition to be prudent.

"Four; and horrible in their paint and bloody trophies. Arrowhead is among them."

June had moved to a corner, where several spare rifles had been deposited, and had already taken one into her hand, when the name of her husband appeared to arrest her movements. It was but for an instant, however, for she immediately went to the loop, and was about to thrust the muzzle of the piece through it, when a feeling of natural aversion induced Mabel to seize her arm.

"No—no—no—June," said the latter—"not against your own husband, though my life be the penalty."

"No hurt Arrowhead—" returned June, with a slight shudder—"no hurt red man at all. No fire at 'em;—only scare."

Mabel now comprehended the intention of June, and no longer opposed it. The latter thrust the muzzle of the rifle through the loop-hole, and taking care to make noise enough to attract attention, she pulled the trigger. The piece had no sooner been discharged than Mabel reproached her friend, for the very act that was intended to serve her.

"You declared it was not your intention to fire," she said, "and you may have destroyed your own husband."

"All run away before I fire—" returned June laughing, and going to another loop to watch the movements of her friends, laughing still heartier.—"See—get cover—every warrior. Think Salt-water and Quarter-Master here. Take good care now."

"Heaven be praised! And now, June, I may hope for a little time to compose my thoughts to prayer, that I may not die like Jennie, thinking only of life and the things of the world!"

June laid aside the rifle, and came and seated herself near the box on which Mabel had sunk, under that physical reaction which accompanies joy as well as sorrow. She looked steadily in our heroine's face, and the latter thought that her countenance had an expression of severity mingled with its concern.

"Arrowhead great warrior—" said the Tuscarora's wife.—"All the girls of tribe look at him much. The pale-face beauty has eyes too?"

"June!—what do these words—that look imply—what would you say?"

"Why you so 'fraid June shoot Arrowhead?"

"Would it not have been horrible, to see a wife destroy her own husband! No, June; rather would I have died myself."

"Very sure, dat all?"

"That was all, June, as God is my judge—and surely that was enough. No—no—there have been sufficient horrors to-day, without increasing them by an act like this. What other motive can you suspect?"

"Don't know. Poor Tuscarora girl very foolish. Arrowhead great chief, and look all round him. Talk of pale-face beauty in his sleep.—Great chief like many wives."

"Can a chief possess more than one wife, June, among your people?"

"Have as many as he can keep—great hunter marry often. Arrowhead got only June now, but he look too much, —see too much—talk too much of pale-face girl!"

Mabel was conscious of this fact, which had distressed her not a little, in the course of their journey; but it shocked her to hear this allusion, coming, as it did, from the mouth of the wife herself. She knew that habit and opinions made great differences in such matters, but, in addition to the pain and mortification she experienced at being the unwilling rival of a wife, she felt an apprehension that jealousy would be but an equivocal guarantee for her personal safety, in her present situation. A closer look at June, however, reassured her; for while it was easy to trace in the unpractised features of this unsophisticated being, the pain of blighted affections, no distrust could have tortured the earnest expression of her honest countenance into that of treachery or hate.

"You will not betray me, June," Mabel said, pressing the other's hand, and yielding to an impulse of generous confidence. "You will not give up one of your own sex to the tomahawk?"

"No tomahawk touch you. Arrowhead no let 'em. If June must have sister-wife, love to have you."

"No, June; my religion, my feelings, both forbid it; and, if I could be the wife of an Indian at all, I would never take the place that is yours, in a wigwam."

June made no answer, but she looked gratified, and even grateful. She knew that few, perhaps no Indian girl, within the circle of Arrowhead's acquaintance, could compare with herself in personal attractions; and though it might suit her husband to marry a dozen wives, she knew of no one, beside Mabel, whose influence she could really dread. So keen an interest, however, had she taken in the beauty, winning manners, kindness, and feminine gentleness of our heroine, that when jealousy came to chill these feelings, it had rather lent strength to that interest, and, under its wayward influence, had actually been one of the strongest of the incentives that had induced her to risk so much, in order to save her imaginary rival from the consequences of the attack that she so well knew was about to take place. In a word, June, with a wife's keenness of perception, had detected Arrowhead's admiration of Mabel, and instead of feeling that harrowing jealousy that might have rendered her rival hateful, as would have been apt to be the case with a woman unaccustomed to defer to the superior rights of the lordly sex, she had studied the looks and character of the pale-face beauty, until, meeting with nothing to repel her own feelings, but everything to encourage them, she had got to entertain an admiration and love for her, which, though certainly very different, was scarcely less strong than that of her husband's. Arrowhead himself had sent her to warn Mabel of the coming danger, though he was ignorant that she had stolen upon the island, in the rear of the assailants, and was now entrenched in the citadel along with the object of their joint care. On the contrary, he supposed, as his wife had said, that Cap and Muir were in the block-house with Mabel, and that the attempt to repel him and his companions had been made by the men.

"June sorry, 'the Lily,'" for so the Indian, in her poetical language, had named our heroine—"June sorry, the Lily no marry Arrowhead. His wigwam big, and a great chief must get wives enough to fill it."

"I thank you, June, for this preference, which is not according to the notions of us white women," returned Mabel, smiling in spite of the fearful situation in which she was placed; "but I may not, probably never shall, marry at all."

"Must have good husband," said June—"marry Eau-douce, if do'nt like Arrowhead."

"June! this is not a fit subject for a girl who scarce knows if she is to live another hour, or not. I would obtain some signs of my dear uncle's being alive, and safe, if possible."

"June go see."

"Can you?—will you?—would it be safe for you to be seen on the island—is your presence known to the warriors, and would they be pleased to find a woman on the war-path with them?"

All this, Mabel asked in rapid connection, fearing that the answer might not be as she wished. She had thought it extraordinary that June should be of the party, and, improbable as it seemed, she had fancied that the woman had covertly followed the Iroquois in her own canoe, and had got in their advance, merely to give her the notice which had, probably, saved her life. But in all this she was mistaken, as June, in her imperfect manner, now found means to let her know.

Arrowhead, though a chief, was in disgrace with his own people, and was acting with the Iroquois, temporarily, though with a perfect understanding. He had a wigwam, it is true, but was seldom in it; feigning friendship for the English, he had passed the summer ostensibly in their service, while he was, in truth, acting for the French, and his wife journeyed with him in his many migrations, most of the distances being passed over in canoes. In a word, her presence was no secret, her husband seldom moving without her. Enough of this to embolden Mabel to wish that her friend might go out, to ascertain the fate of her uncle, did June succeed in letting the other know; and it was soon settled between them, that the Indian woman should quit the block-house with that object, the moment a favourable opportunity offered.

They first examined the island, as thoroughly as their position would allow, from the different loops, and found that its conquerors were preparing for a feast, having seized upon the provisions of the English, and rifled the huts. Most of the stores were in the block-house, but enough were found outside, to reward the Indians for an attack that had been attended by so little risk. A party had already removed the dead bodies, and Mabel saw that their arms were collected in a pile, near the spot chosen for the banquet. June sug-

gested that, by some signs which she understood, the dead, themselves, were carried into a thicket, and either buried, or concealed from view. None of the more prominent objects on the island, however, were disturbed, it being the desire of the conquerors to lure the party of the serjeant into an ambush, on its return. June made her companion observe a man in a tree, a look-out, as she said, to give timely notice of the approach of any boat, although the departure of the expedition being so recent, nothing but some unexpected event would be likely to bring it back so soon. There did not appear to be any intention to attack the block-house immediately; but every indication, as understood by June, rather showed that it was the intention of the Indians to keep it besieged until the return of the serjeant's party, lest the signs of an assault should give a warning to eyes as practised as those of Pathfinder. The boat, however, had been secured, and was removed to the spot where the canoes of the Indians were hid in the bushes.

June now announced her intention to join her friends, the moment being particularly favourable for her to quit the block-house. Mabel felt some distrust as they descended the ladder; but, at the next instant, she was ashamed of the feeling, as unjust to her companion, and unworthy of herself: and, by the time they both stood on the ground, her confidence was restored. The process of unbarring the door was conducted with the utmost caution; and when the last bar was ready to be turned, June took her station near the spot where the opening must necessarily be. The bar was just turned free of the brackets—the door was opened merely wide enough to allow her body to pass, and June glided through the space. Mabel closed the door again, with a convulsive movement; and, as the bar turned into its place, her heart beat audibly. She then felt secure; and the two other bars were turned down in a more deliberate manner. When all was fast again, she ascended to the first floor, where, alone, she could get a glimpse of what was going on without.

Long, and painfully melancholy hours passed, during which Mabel had no intelligence from June. She heard the yells of the savages; for liquor had carried them beyond the bounds of precaution: occasionally caught glimpses of their mad orgies through the loops, and, at all times, was con-

scious of their fearful presence, by sounds and sights that would have chilled the blood of one who had not so lately witnessed scenes so much more terrible. Toward the middle of the day, she fancied she saw a white man on the island, though his dress and wild appearance at first made her take him for a newly arrived savage. A view of his face, although it was swarthy naturally, and much darkened by exposure, left no doubt that her conjecture was true; and she felt as if there was now one of a species more like her own present, and one to whom she might appeal for succour in the last emergency. Mabel little knew, alas! how small was the influence exercised by the whites over their savage allies, when the latter had begun to taste of blood; or how slight, indeed, was the disposition to divert them from their cruelties.

The day seemed a month, by Mabel's computation; and the only part of it that did not drag were the minutes spent in prayer. She had recourse to this relief from time to time; and at each effort, she found her spirit firmer, her mind more tranquil, and her tendency to resignation more confirmed. She understood the reasoning of June; and believed it highly probable that the block-house would be left unmolested until the return of her father, in order to entice him into an ambuscade; and she felt much less apprehension of immediate danger, in consequence: but the future offered little ground of hope; and her thoughts had already begun to calculate the chances of her captivity. At such moments, Arrowhead, and his offensive admiration, filled a prominent place in the back-ground; for our heroine well knew that the Indians usually carried off to their villages, for the purposes of adoption, such captives as they did not slay; and that many instances had occurred, in which individuals of her sex had passed the remainder of their lives in the wigwams of their conquerors. Such thoughts as these invariably drove her to her knees, and to her prayers.

While the light lasted, the situation of our heroine was sufficiently alarming, but as the shades of evening gradually gathered over the island, it became fearfully appalling. By this time, the savages had wrought themselves up to the point of fury, for they had possessed themselves of all the liquor of the English, and their outcries and gesticulations

were those of men truly possessed of evil spirits. All the efforts of their French leader to restrain them, were entirely fruitless, and he had wisely withdrawn to an adjacent island, where he had a sort of bivouac, that he might keep at a safe distance from friends so apt to run into excesses. Before quitting the spot, however, this officer, at great risk to his own life, had succeeded in extinguishing the fire, and in securing the ordinary means to relight it. This precaution he took, lest the Indians should burn the block-house, the preservation of which was necessary to the success of his future plans. He would gladly have removed all the arms, also, but this he found impracticable, the warriors clinging to their knives and tomahawks with the tenacity of men who regarded a point of honour, as long as a faculty was left; and to carry off the rifles, and leave behind him the very weapons that were generally used on such occasions, would have been an idle expedient. The extinguishing of the fire, proved to be the most prudent measure, for no sooner was the officer's back turned, than one of the warriors, in fact, proposed to fire the block-house. Arrowhead had also withdrawn from the group of drunkards, as soon as he found that they were losing their senses, and had taken possession of a hut, where he had thrown himself on the straw, and sought the rest that two wakeful and watchful nights had rendered necessary. It followed that no one was left among the Indians to care for Mabel, if indeed any knew of her existence at all; and the proposal of the drunkard was received with yells of delight by eight or ten more, as much intoxicated and habitually as brutal as himself.

This was the fearful moment for Mabel. The Indians, in their present condition, were reckless of any rifles that the block-house might hold, though they did retain dim recollections of its containing living beings, an additional incentive to their enterprise, and they approached its base whooping and leaping like demons. As yet they were excited, not overcome by the liquor they had drunk. The first attempt was made at the door, against which they ran in a body; but the solid structure, which was built entirely of logs, defied their efforts. The rush of a hundred men, with the same object, would have been useless. This Mabel, however, did not know, and her heart seemed to leap into her mouth, as

she heard the heavy shock, at each renewed effort. At length, when she found that the door resisted these assaults, as if it were of stone, neither trembling, nor yielding, and only betraying its not being a part of the wall, by rattling a little on its heavy hinges, her courage revived, and she seized the first moment of a cessation, to look down through the loop, in order, if possible, to learn the extent of her danger. A silence, for which it was not easy to account, stimulated her curiosity, for nothing is so alarming to those who are conscious of the presence of imminent danger, as to be unable to trace its approach.

Mabel found that two or three of the Iroquois had been raking the embers, where they had found a few small coals, and with these they were endeavouring to light a fire. The interest with which they laboured, the hope of destroying, and the force of habit enabled them to act intelligently and in unison, so long as their fell object was kept in view. A white man would have abandoned the attempt to light a fire in despair, with coals that came out of the ashes resembling sparks, but these children of the forests had many expedients that were unknown to civilization. By the aid of a few dry leaves, which they alone knew where to seek, a blaze was finally kindled, and then the addition of a few light sticks made sure of the advantage that had been obtained. When Mabel stooped down over the loop, the Indians were making a pile of brush against the door, and as she remained gazing at their proceedings, she saw the twigs ignite, the flame dart from branch to branch, until the whole pile was cracking and snapping under a bright blaze. The Indians now gave a yell of triumph and returned to their companions, well assured that the work of destruction was commenced. Mabel remained looking down, scarcely able to tear herself away from the spot, so intense and engrossing was the interest she felt in the progress of the fire. As the pile kindled throughout, however, the flames mounted, until they flashed so near her eyes, as to compel her to retreat. Just as she reached the opposite side of the room, to which she had retired in her alarm, a forked stream shot up through the loop-hole, the lid of which she had left open, and illuminated the rude apartment, with Mabel and her desolation. Our heroine now naturally enough supposed that her hour was come, for the

door, the only means of retreat, had been blocked up by the brush and fire, with hellish ingenuity, and she addressed herself, as she believed for the last time, to her Maker in prayer. Her eyes were closed, and for more than a minute her spirit was abstracted; but the interests of the world too strongly divided her feelings, to be altogether suppressed; and when they involuntarily opened again, she perceived that the streak of flame was no longer flaring in the room, though the wood around the little aperture had kindled, and the blaze was slowly mounting under the impulsion of a current of air that sucked inward. A barrel of water stood in a corner, and Mabel, acting more by instinct than by reason, caught up a vessel, filled it, and pouring it on the wood with a trembling hand, succeeded in extinguishing the fire, at that particular spot. The smoke prevented her from looking down again, for a couple of minutes; but when she did, her heart beat high with delight and hope, at finding that the pile of blazing brush had been overturned and scattered, and that water had been thrown on the logs of the door, which were still smoking, though no longer burning.

"Who is there?" said Mabel, with her mouth at the loop. "What friendly hand has a merciful Providence sent to my succour?"

A light footstep was audible below, and one of those gentle pushes at the door was heard, which just moved the massive beams on the hinges.

"Who wishes to enter?—Is it you, dear, dear uncle?"

"Salt-water no here. St. Lawrence sweet water," was the answer. "Open quick—want to come in."

The step of Mabel was never lighter, or her movements more quick and natural, than while she was descending the ladder and turning the bars, for all her motions were earnest and active. This time she thought only of her escape, and she opened the door with a rapidity that did not admit of caution. Her first impulse was to rush into the open air, in the blind hope of quitting the block-house, but June repulsed the attempt, and, entering, she coolly barred the door again, before she would notice Mabel's eager efforts to embrace her.

"Bless you—bless you, June," cried our heroine most fervently—"you are sent by Providence to be my guardian angel!"

"No hug so tight—" answered the Tuscarora woman.—
"Pale-face woman all cry, or all laugh. Let June fasten door."

Mabel became more rational, and in a few minutes the two were again in the upper room, seated as before, hand in hand, all feeling of distrust or rivalry between them, being banished on the one side by the consciousness of favours received, and on the other by the consciousness of favours conferred.

"Now tell me, June," Mabel commenced, as soon as she had given and received one warm embrace, "have you seen or heard aught of my poor uncle?"

"Don't know. No one see him; no one hear him; no one know any t'ing. Salt-water run into river, I t'ink, for I no find him. Quarter-Master gone too. I look, and look, and look; but no see 'em, one, t'other, no where."

"Blessed be God! They must have escaped, though the means are not known to us. I thought I saw a Frenchman on the island, June?"

"Yes—French captain come, but he go away, too. Plenty of Indian on island."

"Oh! June, June, are there no means to prevent my beloved father from falling into the hands of his enemies?"

"Don't know; t'ink dat warriors wait in ambush, and Yengeese must lose scalp."

"Surely, surely, June, you, who have done so much for the daughter, will not refuse to help the father!"

"Don't know fader—don't love fader. June help her own people, help Arrowhead—husband love scalp."

"June, this is not yourself! I cannot, will not believe, that you wish to see our men murdered!"

June turned her dark eyes quietly on Mabel, and, for a moment, her look was stern, though it was soon changed into one of melancholy compassion.

"Lily, Yengeese girl?" she said, as one asks a question.

"Certainly, and as a Yengeese girl, I would save my countrymen from slaughter."

"Very good—if can. June no Yengeese; June Tuscarora—got Tuscarora husband—Tuscarora heart—Tuscarora feeling—all over Tuscarora. Lily wouldn't run and tell French that her fader was coming to gain victory?"

"Perhaps not," returned Mabel, pressing a hand on a

brain that felt bewildered,—“perhaps not; but you serve me, aid me—have saved me, June! Why have you done this, if you only feel as a Tuscarora?”

“Don’t only feel as Tuscarora—feel as girl—feel as squaw. Love pretty Lily, and put it in my bosom.”

Mabel melted into tears, and she pressed the affectionate creature to her heart. It was near a minute before she could renew the discourse, but then she succeeded in speaking more calmly and with greater coherence.

“Let me know the worst, June;” she said. “To-night, your people are feasting; what do they intend to do to-morrow?”

“Don’t know—afraid to see Arrowhead—afraid to ask question—t’ink hide away, till Yengeese come back.”

“Will they not attempt any thing against the block-house? You have seen what they can threaten if they will?”

“Too much rum. Arrowhead sleep, or no dare; French captain gone away, or no dare. All go to sleep, now.”

“And you think I am safe for this night, at least?”

“Too much rum. If Lily like June, might do much for her people.”

“I am like you, June, if a wish to serve my countrymen can make a resemblance with one as courageous as yourself.”

“No—no—no”—muttered June, in a low voice; “no got heart, and June no let you, if had. June’s moder prisoner once, and warriors got drunk; moder tomahawked ’em all. Such the way red-skin women do, when people in danger and want scalp.”

“You say what is true,” returned Mabel, shuddering, and unconsciously dropping June’s hand. “I cannot do that. I have neither the strength, the courage, nor the will to dip my hands in blood.”

“T’ink that too; then stay where you be—block-house good—got no scalp.”

“You believe, then, that I am safe here, at least until my father and his people return?”

“Know so. No dare touch block-house in morning. Hark! all still now—drink rum till head fall down, and sleep like log.”

“Might I not escape? Are there not several canoes on

the island?—might I not get one, and go and give my father notice of what has happened?"

"Know how to paddle?" demanded June, glancing her eye furtively at her companion.

"Not so well as yourself, perhaps; but enough to get out of sight before morning."

"What do then?—couldn't paddle six—ten—eight mile!"

"I do not know; I would do much to warn my father, and the excellent Pathfinder, and all the rest, of the danger they are in."

"Like Pathfinder?"

"All like him who know him—you would like him, nay, love him, if you only knew his heart!"

"No like him, at all. Too good rifle—too good eye—too much shoot Iroquois, and June's people. Must get his scalp if can."

"And I must save it, if I can, June. In this respect, then, we are opposed to each other. I will go and find a canoe the instant they are all asleep, and quit the island."

"No can—June won't let you. Call Arrowhead."

"June! you would not betray me—you could not give me up, after all you have done for me?"

"Just so," returned June, making a backward gesture with her hand, and speaking with a warmth and earnestness Mabel had never witnessed in her before. "Call Arrowhead in loud voice. One call from wife, wake a warrior up. June no let Lily help enemy—no let Indian hurt Lily."

"I understand you, June, and feel the nature and justice of your sentiments; and, after all, it were better that I should remain here, for I have most probably overrated my strength. But, tell me one thing: if my uncle comes in the night, and asks to be admitted, you will let me open the door of the block-house that he may enter."

"Sartain—he prisoner here, and June like prisoner, better than scalp; scalp good for honour, prisoner good for feeling. But, Salt-water hide so close, he don't know where he be, himself."

Here June laughed, in her girlish mirthful way, for to her, scenes of violence were too familiar to leave impressions sufficiently deep to change her natural character. A long and discursive dialogue now followed, in which Mabel endeavoured

to obtain clearer notions of her actual situation, under a faint hope that she might possibly be enabled to turn some of the facts she thus learned, to advantage. June answered all her interrogatories, simply, but with a caution which showed she fully distinguished between that which was immaterial, and that which might endanger the safety, or embarrass the future operations of her friends. Our heroine was incapable of making an attempt to entrap her companion, though she plainly perceived, that, could she have been guilty of the meanness, she would have found the undertaking one of extreme difficulty. June, however, was not required to exercise more than a discreet discrimination about what she revealed ; and the substance of the information she gave, may be summed up as follows.

Arrowhead had long been in communication with the French, though this was the first occasion on which he had ever, entirely, thrown aside the mask. He no longer intended to trust himself among the English, for he had discovered traces of distrust, particularly in Pathfinder ; and with Indian bravado, he now rather wished to blazon than to conceal his treachery. He had led the party of warriors, in the attack on the island, subject, however, to the supervision of the Frenchman who has been mentioned, though June declined saying whether he had been the means of discovering the position of a place, that had been thought to be so concealed from the eyes of the enemy, or not. On this point, she would say nothing ; but she admitted that she and her husband had been watching the departure of the Scud, at the time they were overtaken, and captured by the cutter. The French had obtained their information of the precise position of the station, but very recently ; and Mabel felt a pang, like that of some sharp instrument, piercing her heart, when she thought that there were covert allusions of the Indian woman, which would convey the meaning that the intelligence had come from a pale-face, in the employment of Duncan of Lundie. This was intimated, however, rather than said ; and when Mabel had time to reflect on her companion's words, and to remember how sententious and brief her periods were, she found room to hope that she had misunderstood her, and that Jasper Western would yet come out of the affair, freed from every injurious imputation.

June did not hesitate to confess that she had been sent to the island, to ascertain the precise number, and the occupations of those who had been left on it, though she also betrayed, in her *naïve* way, that the wish to serve Mabel, had induced her, principally, to consent to come. In consequence of her report, and information otherwise obtained, the enemy was aware of precisely the force that could be brought against them; they also knew the number of men that had gone with Serjeant Dunham, and were acquainted with the object he had in view, though they were ignorant of the spot where he expected to meet the French boats. It would have been a pleasant sight to witness the eager desire of each of these two sincere females, to ascertain all that might be of consequence to their respective friends; and yet the native delicacy, with which each refrained from pressing the other to make revelations that would have been improper, as well as the sensitive, almost intuitive, feeling, with which each avoided saying aught that might prove injurious to her own nation: as respects each other, there was perfect confidence; as regarded their respective people, entire fidelity. June was quite as anxious, as Mabel could be on any other point, to know where the serjeant had gone, and when he was expected to return; but she abstained from putting the question, with a delicacy that would have done honour to the highest civilization; nor did she once frame any other inquiry, in a way to lead, indirectly, to a betrayal of the much-desired information, on that particular point; though, when Mabel, of her own accord, touched on any matter that might, by possibility, throw a light on the subject, she listened with an intentness that almost suspended respiration.

In this manner, the hours passed away unheeded; for both were too much interested to think of rest. Nature asserted her rights, however, towards morning; and Mabel was persuaded to lie down on one of the straw beds provided for the soldiers, where she soon fell into a deep sleep. June lay near her; and a quiet reigned on the whole island, as profound as if the dominion of the forest had never been invaded by man.

When Mabel awoke, the light of the sun was streaming in through the loop-holes; and she found that the day was considerably advanced. June still lay near her, sleeping as

tranquilly as if she reposed on—we will not say down, for the superior civilization of our own times repudiates the simile—but on a French mattress; and as profoundly as if she had never experienced concern. The movements of Mabel, notwithstanding, soon awakened one so accustomed to vigilance; and then the two took a survey of what was passing around them, by means of the friendly apertures.

CHAPTER VIII.

“What had the Eternall Maker need of thee,
The world in his continuall course to keepe,
That doest all things deface? ne lettest see
The beautie of his worke? Indeede in sleepe,
The slouthfull body that doth love to steepe
His lustlesse limbs, and drowne his baser mind,
Doth praise thee oft, and oft from Stygian deepe,
Calles thee his goddesse, in his errour blind,

And great dame Nature's hand-maide, chearing every kind.”

FAERIE QUEEN.

THE tranquillity of the previous night was not contradicted by the movements of the day. Although Mabel and June went to every loop-hole, not a sign of the presence of a living being on the island was at first to be seen, themselves excepted. There was a smothered fire on the spot where McNab and his comrades had cooked, as if the smoke that curled upwards from it was intended as a lure to the absent; and all around the huts had been restored to former order and arrangement. Mabel started involuntarily, when her eye at length fell on a group of three men, dressed in the scarlet of the 55th, seated on the grass, in lounging attitudes, as if they chatted in listless security; and her blood curdled, as, on a second look, she traced the bloodless faces and glassy eyes of the dead. They were quite near the block-house; so near, indeed, as to have been overlooked at the first eager inquiry: and there was a mocking levity in their postures and gestures, for their limbs were stiffening in different attitudes, intended to resemble life, at which the soul revolted. Still,

horrible as these objects were to those near enough to discover the frightful discrepancy between their assumed and their real characters, the arrangement had been made with an art that would have deceived a negligent observer, at the distance of a hundred yards. After carefully examining the shores of the island, June pointed out to her companion the fourth soldier, seated with his feet hanging over the water, his back fastened to a sapling, and holding a fishing-rod in his hand. The scalpless heads were covered with the caps, and all appearance of blood had been carefully washed from each countenance.

Mabel sickened at this sight, which not only did so much violence to all her notions of propriety, but which was in itself so revolting, and so opposed to natural feeling. She withdrew to a seat, and hid her face in her apron for several minutes, until a low call from June again drew her to a loophole. The latter then pointed out the body of Jennie, seemingly standing in the door of a hut, leaning forward as if to look at the group of men, her cap fluttering in the wind, and her hand grasping a broom. The distance was too great to distinguish the features very accurately; but Mabel fancied that the jaw had been depressed, as if to distort the mouth into a sort of horrible laugh.

"June! June!" she exclaimed, "this exceeds all I have ever heard, or imagined as possible, in the treachery and artifices of your people."

"Tuscarora very cunning;" said June, in a way to show that she rather approved of, than condemned, the uses to which the dead bodies had been applied. "Do soldier no harm now; do Iroquois good; got the scalp, first; now make bodies work. By and by, burn 'em."

This speech told Mabel how far she was separated from her friend in character; and it was several minutes before she could again address her. But this temporary aversion was lost on June, who set about preparing their simple breakfast, in a way to show how insensible she was to feelings in others, that her own habits taught her to discard. Mabel ate sparingly, and her companion as if nothing had happened. Then they had leisure again for their thoughts, and for further surveys of the island. Our heroine, though devoured with a feverish desire to be always at the loops, sel-

dom went that she did not immediately quit them in disgust, though compelled by her apprehensions to return again in a few minutes, called by the rustling of leaves, or the sighing of the wind. It was, indeed, a solemn thing, to look out upon that deserted spot, peopled by the dead in the panoply of the living, and thrown into the attitudes and acts of careless merriment and rude enjoyment. The effect on our heroine was much as if she had found herself an observer of the revelries of demons.

Throughout the livelong day, not an Indian nor a Frenchman was to be seen, and night closed over the frightful but silent masquerade, with the steady and unalterable progress with which the earth obeys her laws, indifferent to the petty actors, and petty scenes, that are in daily bustle and daily occurrence on her bosom. The night was far more quiet than that which had preceded it, and Mabel slept with an increasing confidence, for she now felt satisfied that her own fate would not be decided until the return of her father. The following day he was expected, however, and when our heroine awoke, she ran eagerly to the loops in order to ascertain the state of the weather and the aspect of the skies, as well as the condition of the island. There lounged the fearful group on the grass; the fisherman still hung over the water, seemingly intent on his sport; and the distorted countenance of Jennie glared from out the hut, in horrible contortions. But the weather had changed. The wind blew fresh from the southward, and though the air was bland, it was filled with the elements of storm.

"This grows more and more difficult to bear, June," Mabel said, when she left the window. "I could even prefer to see the enemy, than to look any longer on this fearful array of the dead."

"Hush;—here they come. June thought hear a cry, like a warrior's shout when he take a scalp."

"What mean you!—There is no more butchery! There *can* be no more."

"Salt-water!" exclaimed June, laughing, as she stood peeping through a loop-hole.

"My dear uncle!—Thank God, he then lives.—Oh! June—June, *you* will not let them harm *him*?"

“June poor squaw.—What warrior t’ink of what she say? Arrowhead bring him here.”

By this time Mabel was at a loop, and, sure enough, there were Cap and the Quarter-Master in the hands of the Indians, eight or ten of whom were conducting them to the foot of the block; for, by this capture, the enemy now well knew that there could be no man in the building. Mabel scarcely breathed until the whole party stood ranged directly before the door, when she was rejoiced to see that the French officer was among them. A low conversation followed, in which both the white leader and Arrowhead spoke earnestly to their captives, when the Quarter-Master called out to her, in a voice loud enough to be heard.

“Pretty Mabel!—Pretty Mabel!” he said—“look out of one of the loop-holes, and pity our condition. We are threatened with instant death, unless you open the door to the conquerors. Relent then, or we’ll no be wearing our scalps half an hour from this blessed moment!”

Mabel thought there were mockery and levity in this appeal, and its manner rather fortified than weakened her resolution to hold the place as long as possible.

“Speak to me, uncle,” she said, with her mouth at a loop, “and tell me what I ought to do.”

“Thank God!—thank God!” ejaculated Cap: “the sound of your sweet voice, Magnet, lightens my heart of a heavy load, for I feared you had shared the fate of poor Jennie. My breast has felt the last four-and-twenty hours as if a ton of kentledge had been stowed in it. You ask me what you ought to do, child, and I do not know how to advise you, though you are my own sister’s daughter! The most I can say, just now, my poor girl, is most heartily to curse the day you or I ever saw this bit of fresh water.”

“But, uncle, is your life in danger—do *you* think I ought to open the door?”

“A round turn, and two half-hitches make a fast belay: and I would counsel no one, who is out of the hands of these devils, to unbar or unfasten any thing, in order to fall into them. As to the Quarter-Master and myself, we are both elderly men, and not of much account to mankind in general, as honest Pathfinder would say; and it can make no great odds to him, whether he balances the purser’s books this year

or the next ; and as for myself, why, if I were on the sea-board, I should know what to do—but up here, in this watery wilderness, I can only say, that if I were behind that bit of a bulwark, it would take a good deal of Indian logic to rowse me out of it.”

“ You ’ll no be minding all your uncle says, pretty Mabel,” put in Muir, “ for distress is obviously fast unsettling his faculties, and he is far from calculating all the necessities of the emergency. We are in the hands, here, of very considerate and gentlemanly pairsons, it must be acknowledged, and one has little occasion to apprehend disagreeable violence. The casualties that have occurred, are the common incidents of war, and can no change our sentiments of the enemy, for they are far from indicating that any injustice will be done the prisoners. I’m sure that neither Master Cap, nor myself, has any cause of complaint, since we have given ourselves up to Master Arrowhead, who reminds me of a Roman, or a Spartan, by his virtues and moderation ; but ye ’ll be remembering that usages differ, and that our scalps may be lawful sacrifices to appease the manes of fallen foes, unless you save them by capitulation.”

“ I shall do wiser to keep within the block-house, until the fate of the island is settled,” returned Mabel. “ Our enemies can feel no concern on account of one like me, knowing that I can do them no harm ; and I greatly prefer to remain here, as more befitting my sex, and years.”

“ If nothing but your convenience were concerned, Mabel, we should all cheerfully acquiesce in your wishes ; but these gentlemen fancy that the work will aid their operations, and they have a strong desire to possess it. To be frank with you, finding myself, and your uncle, in a very peculiar situation, I acknowledge that, to avert consequences, I have assumed the power that belongs to His Majesty’s commission, and entered into a verbal capitulation, by which I have engaged to give up the block-house, and the whole island. It is the fortune of war, and must be submitted to ; so open the door, pretty Mabel, forthwith, and confide yourself to the care of those who know how to treat beauty and virtue in distress. There’s no courtier in Scotland more complaisant than this chief, or who is more familiar with the laws of decorum.”

"No leave block-house," muttered June, who stood at Mabel's side, attentive to all that passed. "Block-house good; got no scalp."

Our heroine might have yielded, but for this appeal; for it began to appear to her, that the wisest course would be to conciliate the enemy by concessions, instead of exasperating them by resistance. They must know that Muir and her uncle were in their power; that there was no man in the building; and she fancied they might proceed to batter down the door, or to cut their way through the logs with axes, if she obstinately refused to give them peaceable admission, since there was no longer any reason to dread the rifle. But the words of June induced her to hesitate; and the earnest pressure of the hand, and entreating looks of her companion, strengthened a resolution that was faltering.

"No prisoner yet," whispered June—"let 'em make prisoner, before 'ey take prisoner—talk big; June manage 'em."

Mabel now began to parley more resolutely with Muir, for her uncle seemed disposed to quiet his conscience by holding his tongue; and she plainly intimated that it was not her intention to yield the building.

"You forget the capitulation, Mistress Mabel," said Muir; "the honour of one of His Majesty's servants is concerned; and the honour of His Majesty, through his servant. You will remember the finesse and delicacy that belong to military honour?"

"I know enough, Mr. Muir, to understand that you have no command in this expedition, and, therefore, can have no right to yield the block-house; and I remember, moreover, to have heard my dear father say, that a prisoner loses all his authority, for the time being."

"Rank sophistry, pretty Mabel, and treason to the king, as well as dishonouring his commission, and discrediting his name. You'll no be persevering in your intentions, when your better judgment has had leisure to reflect, and to make conclusions, on matters and circumstances."

"Ay," put in Cap, "this is a circumstance, and be d——d to it!"

"No mind what 'e uncle say," ejaculated June, who was occupied in a far corner of the room. "Block-house good; got no scalp."

"I shall remain as I am, Mr. Muir, until I get some tidings of my father. He will return in the course of the next ten days."

"Ah! Mabel, this artifice will no deceive the enemy, who, by means that would be unintelligible, did not our suspicions rest on an unhappy young man with too much plausibility, are familiar with all our doings and plans, and well know that the sun will not set before the worthy serjeant and his companions will be in their power. Aweel! Submission to Providence is truly a Christian virtue!"

"Mr. Muir, you appear to be deceived in the strength of this work, and to fancy it weaker than it is. Do you desire to see what I can do in the way of defence, if so disposed?"

"I dinna' mind if I do," answered the Quarter-Master, who always grew Scotch as he grew interested.

"What do you think of that, then?—Look at the loop of the upper story."

As soon as Mabel had spoken, all eyes were turned upward, and beheld the muzzle of a rifle cautiously thrust through a hole—June having resorted again to a *ruse* that had already proved so successful. The result did not disappoint expectation. No sooner did the Indians catch a sight of the fatal weapon, than they leaped aside, and, in less than a minute, every man among them had sought a cover. The French officer kept his eye on the barrel of the piece, in order to ascertain that it was not pointed in his particular direction, and he coolly took a pinch of snuff. As neither Muir nor Cap had any thing to apprehend from the quarter in which the others were menaced, they kept their ground.

"Be wise, my pretty Mabel, be wise," exclaimed the former, "and no be provoking useless contention. In the name of all the kings of Albin, who have ye closeted with you in that wooden tower, that seemeth so bloody-minded? There is necromancy about this matter, and all our characters may be involved in the explanation."

"What do ye think of the Pathfinder, Master Muir, for a garrison to so strong a post?" cried Mabel, resorting to an equivocation that the circumstances rendered very excusable. "What will your French and Indian companions think of the aim of the Pathfinder's rifle?"

"Bear gently on the unfortunate, pretty Mabel, and do not confound the king's servants, may Heaven bless him

and all his royal lineage ! with the king's enemies. If Pathfinder be indeed in the block-house, let him speak, and we will hold our negotiations directly with him. He knows us as friends, and we fear no evil at his hands, and least of all to myself ; for a generous mind is apt to render rivalry in a certain interest, a sure ground of respect and amity ; since admiration of the same woman proves a community of feeling and tastes."

The reliance on Pathfinder's friendship did not extend beyond the Quarter-Master and Cap, however, for even the French officer, who had hitherto stood his ground so well, shrunk back at the sound of the terrible name. So unwilling indeed did this individual, a man of iron nerves, and one long accustomed to the dangers of the peculiar warfare in which he was engaged, appear to be to remain exposed to the assaults of Killdeer, whose reputation throughout all that frontier was as well established as that of Marlborough in Europe, that he did not disdain to seek a cover, insisting that his two prisoners should follow him. Mabel was too glad to be rid of her enemies to lament the departure of her friends, though she kissed her hand to Cap, through the loop, and called out to him in terms of affection as he moved slowly and unwillingly away.

The enemy now seemed disposed to abandon all attempts on the block-house, for the present ; and June, who had ascended to a trap in the roof, whence the best view was to be obtained, reported that the whole party had assembled to eat, on a distant and sheltered part of the island, where Muir and Cap were quietly sharing in the good things that were going, as if they had no concern on their minds. This information greatly relieved Mabel, and she began to turn her thoughts again to the means of effecting her own escape, or at least of letting her father know of the danger that awaited him. The serjeant was expected to return that afternoon, and she knew that a moment gained or lost might decide his fate.

Three or four hours flew by. The island was again buried in a profound quiet, the day was wearing away, and yet Mabel had decided on nothing. June was in the basement preparing their frugal meal, and Mabel herself had ascended to the roof, which was provided with a trap that allowed her to go out on the top of the building, whence she commanded

the best view of surrounding objects that the island possessed. Still it was limited, and much obstructed by the tops of trees. The anxious girl did not dare to trust her person in sight, knowing well that the unrestrained passions of some savage might induce him to send a bullet through her brain. She merely kept her head out of the trap, therefore, whence in the course of the afternoon, she made as many surveys of the different channels about the island, as "Anne, sister Anne" took of the environs of the castle of Blue Beard.

The sun had actually set, no intelligence had been received from the boats, and Mabel ascended to the roof, to take a last look, hoping that the party would arrive in the darkness; which would at least prevent the Indians from rendering their ambuscade as fatal as it might otherwise prove, and which possibly might enable her to give some more intelligible signal, by means of fire, than it would otherwise be in her power to do. Her eye had turned carefully round the whole horizon, and she was just on the point of drawing in her person, when an object that struck her as new, caught her attention. The islands lay grouped so closely, that six or eight different channels or passages between them were in view; and in one of the most covered, concealed in a great measure by the bushes of the shore, lay, what a second look assured her, was a bark canoe. It contained a human being beyond a question. Confident that, if an enemy, her signal could do no harm, and, if a friend, that it might do good, the eager girl waved a little flag towards the stranger, which she had prepared for her father, taking care that it should not be seen from the island.

Mabel had repeated her signal eight or ten times in vain, and she began to despair of its being noticed, when a sign was given in return, by the wave of a paddle, and the man so far discovered himself, as to let her see it was Chingachgook. Here, then, at last, was a friend; one, too, who was able, and she doubted not would be willing to aid her! From that instant her courage and her spirits revived. The Mohican had seen her; must have recognised her, as he knew that she was of the party; and no doubt, as soon as it was sufficiently dark, he would take the steps necessary to release her. That he was aware of the presence of the enemy was apparent by the great caution he observed, and she had every

reliance on his prudence and address. The principal difficulty now existed with June, for Mabel had seen too much of her fidelity to her own people, relieved as it was by sympathy for herself, to believe she would consent to a hostile Indian's entering the block-house, or indeed to her leaving it, with a view to defeat Arrowhead's plans. The half hour that succeeded the discovery of the presence of the Great Serpent, was the most painful of Mabel Dunham's life. She saw the means of effecting all she wished, as it might be within reach of her hand, and yet it eluded her grasp. She knew June's decision and coolness, notwithstanding all her gentleness and womanly feeling, and at last she came reluctantly to the conclusion that there was no other way of attaining her end, than by deceiving her tried companion and protector. It was revolting to one as sincere and natural, as pure of heart and as much disposed to ingenuousness as Mabel Dunham, to practise deception on a friend like June; but her own father's life was at stake, her companion would receive no positive injury, and she had feelings and interests directly touching herself, that would have removed greater scruples.

As soon as it was dark, Mabel's heart began to beat with violence; and she adopted and changed her plan of proceedings, at least a dozen times in the course of a single hour. June was always the source of her greatest embarrassment; for she did not well see, firstly, how she was to ascertain when Chingachgook was at the door, where she doubted not he would soon appear; and, secondly, how she was to admit him, without giving the alarm to her watchful companion. Time pressed, however; for the Mohican might come and go away again, unless she was ready to receive him. It would be too hazardous to the Delaware to remain long on the island; and it became absolutely necessary to determine on some course, even at the risk of choosing one that was indiscreet. After running over various projects in her mind, therefore, Mabel came to her companion, and said, with as much calmness as she could assume——

“Are you not afraid, June, now your people believe Pathfinder is in the block-house, that they will come, and try to set it on fire?”

“No t'ink such t'ing. No burn block-house. Block-house good: got no scalp.”

"June, we cannot know. They hid, because they believed what I told them of Pathfinder's being with us."

"Believe fear. Fear come quick, go quick. Fear make run away; wit make come back. Fear make warrior fool, as well as young girl."

Here June laughed, as her sex is apt to laugh, when anything particularly ludicrous crosses their youthful fancies.

"I feel uneasy, June; and wish you yourself would go up again to the roof, and look out upon the island, to make certain that nothing is plotting against us; you know the signs of what your people intend to do better than I."

"June go, Lily wish; but very well know that Indian sleep: wait for 'e fader. Warrior eat, drink, sleep, all time, when don't fight, and go on war-trail. Den never sleep, eat, drink—never feel. Warrior sleep, now."

"God send it may be so: but go up, dear June, and look well about you. Danger may come when we least expect it."

June arose, and prepared to ascend to the roof; but she paused, with her foot on the first round of the ladder. Mabel's heart beat so violently, that she was fearful its throbs would be heard; and she fancied that some gleamings of her real intentions had crossed the mind of her friend. She was right, in part; the Indian woman having actually stopped to consider whether there was any indiscretion in what she was about to do. At first, the suspicion that Mabel intended to escape flashed across her mind; then she rejected it, on the ground that the pale-face had no means of getting off the island, and that the block-house was much the most secure place she could find. The next thought was, that Mabel had detected some sign of the near approach of her father. This idea, too, lasted but an instant; for June entertained some such opinion of her companion's ability to understand symptoms of this sort—symptoms that had escaped her own sagacity—as a woman of high fashion entertains of the accomplishments of her maid. Nothing else in the same way offering, she began slowly to mount the ladder.

Just as she reached the upper floor, a lucky thought suggested itself to our heroine; and, by expressing it in a hurried, but natural manner, she gained a great advantage in executing her projected scheme.

"I will go down," she said, "and listen by the door, June; while you are on the roof; and we will thus be on our guard, at the same time, above and below."

Though June thought this savoured of unnecessary caution, well knowing no one could enter the building, unless aided from within, nor any serious danger menace them from the exterior, without giving sufficient warning, she attributed the proposition to Mabel's ignorance and alarm; and, as it was made apparently with frankness, it was received without distrust. By these means, our heroine was enabled to descend to the door, as her friend ascended to the roof; and June felt no unusual inducement to watch her. The distance between the two was now too great to admit of conversation; and, for three or four minutes, one was occupied in looking about her, as well as the darkness would allow, and the other, in listening at the door, with as much intentness, as if all her senses were absorbed in the single faculty of hearing.

June discovered nothing from her elevated stand; the obscurity, indeed, almost forbade the hope of such a result, but it would not be easy to describe the sensation with which Mabel thought she perceived a slight and guarded push against the door. Fearful that all might not be as she wished, and anxious to let Chingachgook know that she was near, she began, though in tremulous and low notes, to sing. So profound was the stillness at the moment, that the sound of the unsteady warbling ascended to the roof, and in a minute June began to descend. A slight tap at the door was heard immediately after. Mabel was bewildered, for there was no time to lose. Hope proved stronger than fear, and with unsteady hands, she commenced unbarring the door. The moccasin of June was heard on the floor above her, when only a single bar was turned. The second was released as her form reached half-way down the lower ladder.

"What you do!" exclaimed June, angrily.—"Run away—mad—leave block-house? Block-house good."—The hands of both were on the last bar, and it would have been cleared from the fastenings, but for a vigorous shove from without, which jammed the wood. A short struggle ensued, though both were disinclined to violence. June would probably have prevailed, had not another and a more vigorous push from

without forced the bar past the trifling impediment that held it, when the door opened. The form of a man was seen to enter, and both the females rushed up the ladder, as if equally afraid of the consequences. The stranger secured the door, and, first examining the lower room with great care, he cautiously ascended the ladder. June, as soon as it became dark, had closed the loops of the principal floor, and lighted a candle. By means of this dim taper, then, the two females stood in expectation, waiting to ascertain the person of their visiter, whose wary ascent of the ladder was distinctly audible, though sufficiently deliberate. It would not be easy to say which was the most astonished on finding, when the stranger had got through the trap, that Pathfinder stood before them?

"God be praised!" Mabel exclaimed, for the idea that the block-house would be impregnable with such a garrison, at once crossed her mind. "Oh! Pathfinder, what has become of my father?"

"The sarjeant is safe, as yet, and victorious, though it is not in the gift of man to say what will be the ind of it. Is not that the wife of Arrowhead, skulking in the corner, there?"

"Speak not of her reproachfully, Pathfinder; I owe her my life—my present security;—tell me what has happened to my father's party, why you are here, and I will relate all the horrible events that have passed upon this island."

"Few words will do the last, Mabel; for one used to Indian deviltries needs but little explanations on such a subject. Every thing turned out as we had hoped with the expedition, for the Sarpent was on the look-out, and he met us with all the information heart could desire. We ambushed three boats, druv' the Frenchers out of them, got possession and sunk them, according to orders, in the deepest part of the channel; and the savages of Upper Canada will fare badly for Indian goods this winter. Both powder and ball, too, will be scarcer among them, than keen hunters and actyve warriors may relish. We did not lose a man, or have even a skin barked; nor do I think the inemy suffered to speak of. In short, Mabel, it has been just such an expedition as Lundie likes; much harm to the foe, and little harm to ourselves."

“Ah! Pathfinder, I fear when Major Duncan comes to hear the whole of the sad tale, he will find reason to regret he ever undertook the affair!”

“I know what you mean—I know what you mean; but, by telling my story straight, you will understand it better. As soon as the sarjeant found himself successful, he sent me and the Sarpent off in canoes, to tell you how matters had turned out, and he is following with the two boats; which being so much heavier, cannot arrive before morning. I parted from Chingachgook this forenoon, it being agreed that he should come up one set of channels, and I another, to see that the path was clear. I’ve not seen the chief since.”

Mabel now explained the manner in which she had discovered the Mohican, and her expectation that he would yet come to the block-house.

“Not he—not he!—A regular scout will never get behind walls, or logs, so long as he can keep the open air and find useful employment. I should not have come myself, Mabel, but I promised the sarjeant to comfort you, and to look after your safety. Ah’s me! I reconnoitred the island with a heavy heart this forenoon; and there was a bitter hour when I fancied you might be among the slain.”

“By what lucky accident were you prevented from paddling up boldly to the island, and from falling into the hands of the enemy?”

“By such an accident, Mabel, as Providence employs to tell the hound where to find the deer, and the deer how to throw off the hound. No—no—these artifices and deviltries with dead bodies, may deceive the soldiers of the 55th, and the king’s officers; but they are all lost upon men who have passed their days in the forest. I came down the channel in face of the pretended fisherman, and, though the riptyles have set up the poor wretch with art, it was not ingenious enough to take in a practysed eye. The rod was held too high, for the 55th have learned to fish at Oswego, if they never knew how before; and then the man was too quiet for one who got neither prey nor bite. But we never come in upon a post blindly; and I have lain outside a garrison a whole night, because they had changed their sentries and their mode of standing guard. Neither the Sarpent nor myself would be

likely to be taken in by these clumsy contrivances, which were most probably intended for the Scotch, who are cunning enough in some particulars, though any thing but witches when Indian sarcumventions are in the wind."

"Do you think my father and his men may yet be deceived?" said Mabel, quickly.

"Not if I can prevent it, Mabel. You say the Sarpent is on the look-out, too; so there is a double chance of our succeeding in letting him know his danger; though it is by no means sartain by which channel the party may come."

"Pathfinder," said our heroine solemnly, for the frightful scenes she had witnessed had clothed death with unusual horrors—"Pathfinder, you have professed love for me—a wish to make me your wife?"

"I did ventur' to speak on that subject, Mabel, and the sarjeant has even lately said that you are kindly disposed; but I am not a man to persecute the thing I love."

"Hear me, Pathfinder—I respect you—honour you—revere you—save my father from this dreadful death, and I can worship you. Here is my hand, as a solemn pledge for my faith, when you come to claim it."

"Bless you—bless you, Mabel; this is more than I deserve—more, I fear, than I shall know how to profit by, as I ought. It was not wanting, however, to make me sarve the sarjeant. We are old comrades, and owe each other a life—though I fear me, Mabel, being a father's comrade is not always the best recommendation with the daughter!"

"You want no other recommendation than your own acts—your courage—your fidelity—all that you do and say, Pathfinder, my reason approves, and the heart will, nay, it *shall* follow."

"This is a happiness I little expected this night; but we are in God's hands, and he will protect us in his own way. These are sweet words, Mabel, but they were not wanting to make me do all that man can do, in the present circumstances; they will not lessen my endeavours, neither."

"Now we understand each other, Pathfinder—" Mabel added, hoarsely, "let us not lose one of the precious moments, which may be of incalculable value. Can we not get into your canoe, and go and meet my father?"

"That is not the course I advise. I don't know by which

channel the sarjeant will come, and there are twenty ; rely on it, the Sarpent will be winding his way through them all. No—no—my advice is to remain here. The logs of this block-house are still green, and it will not be easy to set them on fire ; and I can make good the place, bating a burning, ag'in a tribe. The Iroquois nation cannot dislodge me from this fortress, so long as we can keep the flames off it. The sarjeant is now 'camped on some island, and will not come in until morning. If we hold the block, we can give him timely warning, by firing rifles for instance ; and should he determine to attack the savages, as a man of his temper will be very likely to do, the possession of this building will be of great account in the affair. No—no—my judgment says remain, if the object be to sarve the sarjeant ; though escape for our two selves will be no very difficult matter."

"Stay," murmured Mabel—"stay, for God's sake, Pathfinder. Any thing—every thing, to save my father!"

"Yes, that is natur'. I am glad to hear you say this, Mabel, for I own a wish to see the sarjeant fairly supported. As the matter now stands, he has gained himself credit ; and could he once drive off these miscreants, and make an honourable retreat, laying the huts and block in ashes, no doubt, no doubt, Lundie would remember it and sarve him accordingly. Yes, yes, Mabel, we must not only save the sarjeant's life, but we must save his reputation."

"No blame can rest on my father, on account of the surprise of this island!"

"There's no telling—there's no telling ; military glory is a most unsartain thing. I've seen the Delawares routed, when they desarved more credit, than, at other times, when they've carried the day. A man is wrong to set his head on success of any sort, and worst of all, on success in war. I know little of the settlements, or of the notions that men hold in them ; but, up hereaway, even the Indians rate a warrior's character according to his luck. The principal thing with a soldier, is never to be whipt ; nor do I think mankind stops long to consider how the day was won, or lost. For my part, Mabel, I make it a rule when facing the inimy, to give him as good as I can send, and to try to be moderate as I can, when we get the better ; as for feeling moderate, after a defeat, little need be said on that score, as a flogging is one

of the most humbling things in natur'. The parsons preach about humility, in the garrisons; but if humility would make Christians, the king's troops ought to be saints, for they've done little, as yet, this war, but take lessons from the French, beginning at Fort du Quesne, and ending at Ty!"

"My father could not have suspected that the position of the island was known to the enemy," resumed Mabel, whose thoughts were running on the probable effect of the recent events, on the serjeant.

"That is true; nor do I well see how the Frenchers found it out. The spot is well chosen, and it is not an easy matter, even for one who has travelled the road to and from it, to find it again. There has been treachery, I fear; yes, yes, there must have been treachery!"

"Oh! Pathfinder, can this be!"

"Nothing is easier, Mabel, for treachery comes as nat'ral to some men, as eating. Now, when I find a man, all fair words, I look close to his deeds; for when the heart is right, and really intends to do good, it is generally satisfied to let the conduct speak, instead of the tongue."

"Jasper Western is not one of these," said Mabel, impetuously. "No youth can be more sincere in his manner, or less apt to make the tongue act for the head."

"Jasper Western!—tongue and heart are both right with that lad, depend on it, Mabel; and the notion taken up by Lundie, and the Quarter-Master, and the sarjeant, and your uncle, too, is as wrong, as it would be to think that the sun shone by night, and the stars shone by day. No—no—I'll answer for Eau-douce's honesty with my own scalp, or, at need, with my own rifle."

"Bless you—bless you, Pathfinder!" exclaimed Mabel, extending her own hand, and pressing the iron fingers of her companion, under a state of feeling that far surpassed her own consciousness of its strength. "You are all that is generous—all that is noble; God will reward you for it."

"Ah! Mabel, I fear me, if this be true, I should not covet such a wife as yourself, but would leave you to be sued for, by some gentleman of the garrison, as your desarts require!"

"We will not talk of this any more to night," Mabel answered in a voice so smothered, as to seem nearly choked. "We must think less of ourselves, just now, Pathfinder, and

more of our friends. But I rejoice from my soul, that you believe Jasper innocent. Now let us talk of other things—ought we not to release June?”

“I’ve been thinking about the woman, for it will not be safe to shut our eyes and leave hers open, on this side of the block-house door. If we put her in the upper room and take away the ladder, she’ll be a prisoner at least.”

“I cannot treat one thus who has saved my life. It would be better to let her depart, for I think she is too much my friend to do any thing to harm me.”

“You do not know the race, Mabel; you do not know the race. It’s true she is not a full-blooded Mingo, but she consorts with the vagabonds, and must have larned some of their tricks. What is that?”

“It sounds like oars—some boat is passing through the channel!”

Pathfinder closed the trap that led to the lower room, to prevent June from escaping, extinguished the candle, and went hastily to a loop; Mabel looking over his shoulder in breathless curiosity. These several movements consumed a minute or two; and by the time the eye of the scout had got a dim view of things without, two boats had swept past, and shot up to the shore, at a spot some fifty yards beyond the block, where there was a regular landing. The obscurity prevented more from being seen; and Pathfinder whispered to Mabel, that the new comers were as likely to be foes as friends, for he did not think her father could possibly have arrived so soon. A number of men were now seen to quit the boats, and then followed three hearty English cheers, leaving no further doubts of the character of the party. Pathfinder sprang to the trap, raised it, glided down the ladder, and began to unbar the door, with an earnestness that proved how critical he deemed the moment. Mabel had followed, but she rather impeded than aided his exertions, and but a single bar was turned when a heavy discharge of rifles was heard. They were still standing in breathless suspense, as the war-whoop rang in all the surrounding thickets. The door now opened, and both Pathfinder and Mabel rushed into the open air. All human sounds had ceased. After listening half a minute, however, Pathfinder thought he heard a few stifled groans near the boats; but the wind blew so

fresh, and the rustling of the leaves mingled so much with the murmurs of the passing air, that he was far from certain. But Mabel was borne away by her feelings, and she rushed by him, taking the way towards the boats.

"This will not do, Mabel—" said the scout, in an earnest but low voice, seizing her by an arm,—“this will never do. Sartain death would follow, and that without saving any one. We must return to the block.”

"Father!—my poor, dear, murdered father!" said the girl wildly, though habitual caution, even at that trying moment, induced her to speak low. "Pathfinder, if you love me, let me go to my dear father!"

"This will not do, Mabel.—It is singular that no one speaks; no one returns the fire from the boats—and I have left Killdeer in the block!—But of what use would a rifle be when no one is to be seen!"

At that moment, the quick eye of Pathfinder, which, while he held Mabel firmly in his grasp, had never ceased to roam over the dim scene, caught an indistinct view of five or six dark, crouching forms, endeavouring to steal past him, doubtless with the intention of intercepting their retreat to the block-house. Catching up Mabel and putting her under an arm, as if she were an infant, the sinewy frame of the woodsman was exerted to the utmost, and he succeeded in entering the building. The tramp of his pursuers seemed immediately at his heels. Dropping his burthen, he turned, closed the door, and had fastened one bar, as a rush against the solid mass threatened to force it from the hinges. To secure the other bars was the work of an instant.

Mabel now ascended to the first floor, while Pathfinder remained as a sentinel below. Our heroine was in that state in which the body exerts itself, apparently without the control of the mind. She re-lighted the candle mechanically, as her companion had desired, and returned with it below, where he was waiting her re-appearance. No sooner was Pathfinder in possession of the light than he examined the place carefully, to make certain no one was concealed in the fortress, ascending to each floor in succession, after assuring himself that he left no enemy in his rear. The result was the conviction that the block-house now contained no one but Mabel and himself, June having escaped. When perfectly con-

vinced on this material point, Pathfinder rejoined our heroine in the principal apartment, setting down the light and examining the priming of Killdeer before he seated himself.

"Our worst fears are realized!" said Mabel, to whom the hurry and excitement of the last five minutes appeared to contain the emotions of a life. "My beloved father, and all his party, are slain or captured!"

"We don't know that—morning will tell us all. I do not think the affair as settled as that, or we should hear the vagabond Mingos yelling out their triumph around the block-house. Of one thing, we may be sartain; if the inimy has really got the better, he will not be long in calling upon us to surrender. The squaw will let him into the secret of our situation, and, as they well know the place cannot be fired by day-light, so long as Killdeer continues to deserve his reputation, you may depend on it, that they will not be backward in making their attempt, while darkness helps them."

"Surely, I hear a groan!"

"'T is fancy, Mabel,—when the mind gets to be skeary, especially a woman's mind, she often conceits things that have no reality. I've known them that imagined there was truth in dreams—"

"Nay, I am *not* deceived—there is surely one below, and in pain!"

Pathfinder was compelled to own that the quick senses of Mabel had not deceived her. He cautioned her, however, to repress her feelings; and reminded her that the savages were in the practice of resorting to every artifice, to attain their ends, and that nothing was more likely than that the groans were feigned with a view to lure them from the block-house, or, at least, to induce them to open the door.

"No—no—no"—said Mabel, hurriedly,—“there is no artifice in those sounds, and they come from anguish of body, if not of spirit. They are fearfully natural.”

"Well, we shall soon know whether a friend is there, or not. Hide the light again, Mabel, and I will speak the person from a loop."

Not a little precaution was necessary, according to Pathfinder's judgment and experience, in performing even this simple act, for he had known the careless slain by their want of proper attention to, what might have seemed to the igno-

rant, supererogatory means of safety. He did not place his mouth to the loop itself, but so near it that he could be heard without raising his voice, and the same precaution was observed as regards his ear.

"Who is below?" Pathfinder demanded, when his arrangements were made to his mind. "Is any one in suffering? If a friend, speak boldly, and depend on our aid."

"Pathfinder!" answered a voice that both Mabel and the person addressed at once knew to be the serjeant's—"Pathfinder, in the name of God, tell me what has become of my daughter?"

"Father, I am here!—unhurt—safe—and oh! that I could think the same of you!"

The ejaculation of thanksgiving that followed was distinctly audible to the two, but it was clearly mingled with a groan of pain.

"My worst forebodings are realized!" said Mabel, with a sort of desperate calmness. "Pathfinder, my father must be brought within the block, though we hazard every thing to do it."

"This is natur', and it is the law of God. But, Mabel, be calm, and endeavour to be cool. All that can be effected for the sarjeant by human invention, shall be done. I only ask you to be cool."

"I am—I am—Pathfinder. Never in my life was I more calm, more collected, than at this moment. But remember how perilous may be every instant; for Heaven's sake, what we do, let us do without delay."

Pathfinder was struck with the firmness of Mabel's tones, and perhaps he was a little deceived by the forced tranquillity and self-possession she had assumed. At all events, he did not deem any farther explanations necessary, but descended forthwith, and began to unbar the door. This delicate process was conducted with the usual caution, but as he warily permitted the mass of timber to swing back on the hinges, he felt a pressure against it, that had nearly induced him to close it again. But catching a glimpse of the cause through the crack, the door was permitted to swing back, when the body of Serjeant Dunham, which was propped against it, fell partly within the block. To draw in the legs and secure the fastenings, occupied the Pathfinder but a moment. Then there existed no obstacle to their giving their undivided care to the wounded man.

Mabel, in this trying scene, conducted herself with the sort of unnatural energy that her sex, when aroused, is apt to manifest. She got the light, administered water to the parched lips of her father, and assisted Pathfinder in forming a bed of straw for his body, and a pillow of clothes for his head. All this was done earnestly, and almost without speaking; nor did Mabel shed a tear, until she heard the blessings of her father murmured on her head, for this tenderness and care. All this time, Mabel had merely conjectured the condition of her parent. Pathfinder, however, had shown greater attention to the physical danger of the serjeant. He had ascertained that a rifle-ball had passed through the body of the wounded man; and he was sufficiently familiar with injuries of this nature, to be certain that the chances of his surviving the hurt were very trifling, if any.

CHAPTER IX.

"Then--drink my tears, while yet they fall--
Would that my bosom's blood were balm;
And--well thou knowest--I'd shed it all,
To give thy brow one minute's calm."

MOORE.

THE eyes of Serjeant Dunham had not ceased to follow the form of his beautiful daughter, from the moment that the light appeared. He next examined the door of the block, to ascertain its security; for he was left on the ground below, there being no available means of raising him to the upper floor. Then he sought the face of Mabel; for as life wanes fast, the affections resume their force, and we begin to value that most which we feel we are about to lose forever.

"God be praised, my child, you, at least, have escaped their murderous rifles!" he said; for he spoke with strength, and seemingly, with no additional pain. "Give me the history of this sad business, Pathfinder."

"Ah's me! sarjeant; it *has* been sad, as you say. That there has been treachery, and the position of the island has

been betrayed, is now as sartain, in my judgment, as that we still hold the block. But——”

“Major Duncan was right ;” interrupted Dunham, laying a hand on the other’s arm.

“Not in the sense you mean, sarjeant—no, not in that p’int of view ; never. At least, not in my opinion. I know that natur’ is weak—human natur’, I mean—and that we should none of us vaunt of our gifts, whether red or white ; but I do not think a truer-hearted lad lives on the lines, than Jasper Western.”

“Bless you—bless you for that, Pathfinder !” burst forth from Mabel’s very soul, while a flood of tears gave vent to emotions that were so varied, while they were so violent :—
“Oh ! bless you, Pathfinder, bless you. The brave should never desert the brave—the honest should sustain the honest.”

The father’s eyes were fastened anxiously on the face of his daughter, until the latter hid her countenance in her apron, to conceal her tears ; and then they turned with inquiry to the hard features of the guide. The latter merely wore their usual expression of frankness, sincerity, and uprightness ; and the serjeant motioned to him to proceed.

“You know the spot where the Sarpent and I left you, sarjeant,” Pathfinder resumed ; “and I need say nothing of all that happened afore. It is now too late to regret what is gone and passed ; but I do think if I had staid with the boats, this would not have come to pass ! Other men may be as good guides ; I make no doubt they are : but then natur’ bestows its gifts, and some must be better than other some. I dare say, poor Gilbert, who took my place, has suffered for his mistake.”

“He fell at my elbow ;” the serjeant answered, in a low, melancholy tone. “We have, indeed, all suffered for our mistakes !”

“No, no, sarjeant, I meant no condemnation on you ; for men were never better commanded than your’n, in this very expedition. I never beheld a prettier flanking ; and the way in which you carried your own boat up ag’in their howitzer might have teachd Lundie, himself, a lesson.”

The eyes of the serjeant brightened ; and his face even wore an expression of military triumph, though it was of a

degree that suited the humble sphere in which he had been an actor.

"'Twas not badly done, my friend," he said; "and we carried their log breast-work by storm!"

"'Twas nobly done, sarjeant: though I fear when all the truth comes to be known, it will be found that these vagabonds have got their howitzer back ag'in. Well, well, put a stout heart upon it, and try to forget all that is disagreeable, and to remember only the pleasant part of the matter. That is your truest philosophy; ay, and truest religion, too. If the inimy has got the howitzer ag'in, they've only got what belonged to them afore, and what we couldn't help. They hav'n't got the block-house, yet, nor are they likely to get it, unless they fire it in the dark. Well, sarjeant, the Sarpent and I separated about ten miles down the river; for we thought it wisest not to come upon even a friendly camp without the usual caution. What has become of Chingachgook, I cannot say; though Mabel tells me he is not far off: and I make no question the noble-hearted Delaware is doing his duty, although he is not now visible to our eyes. Mark my word, sarjeant; before this matter is over, we shall hear of him at some critical time, and that in a discreet and creditable manner. Ah! the Sarpent is, indeed, a wise and virtuous chief; and any white man might covet his gifts, though his rifle is not quite as sure as Killdeer, it must be owned. Well, as I came near the island, I missed the smoke, and that put me on my guard; for I knew that the men of the 55th were not cunning enough to conceal that sign, notwithstanding all that has been told them of its danger. This made me more careful, until I came in sight of this mock-fisherman, as I've just told Mabel; and then the whole of their infernal arts was as plain before me, as if I saw it on a map. I need not tell you, sarjeant, that my first thoughts were of Mabel; and that, finding she was in the block, I came here, in order to live or die in her company."

The father turned a gratified look upon his child, and Mabel felt a sinking of the heart that, at such a moment, she could not have thought possible, when she wished to believe all her concern centred in the situation of her parent. As the latter held out his hand, she took it in her own, and kissed

it. Then kneeling at his side, she wept as if her heart would break.

"Mabel," he said, steadily, "the will of God must be done. It is useless to attempt deceiving either you or myself: my time has come, and it is a consolation to me, to die like a soldier. Lundie will do me justice, for our good friend Pathfinder will tell him what has been done, and how all came to pass. You do not forget our last conversation?"

"Nay, father, my time has probably come, too," exclaimed Mabel, who felt just then, as if it would be a relief to die. "I cannot hope to escape; and Pathfinder would do well to leave us, and return to the garrison, with the sad news, while he can."

"Mabel Dunham," said Pathfinder, reproachfully, though he took her hand with kindness, "I have not deserved this; I know I am wild, and uncouth, and ungainly—"

"Pathfinder!"

"Well—well, we'll forget it; you did not mean it; you could not think it. It is useless, now, to talk of escaping, for the sarjeant cannot be moved; and the block-house must be defended, cost what it will. May be, Lundie will get the tidings of our disaster, and send a party to raise the siege."

"Pathfinder—Mabel!" said the serjeant, who had been writhing with pain, until the cold sweat stood on his forehead—"come both to my side. You understand each other, I hope?"

"Father, say nothing of that—it is all as you wish."

"Thank God!—Give me your hand, Mabel—here, Pathfinder, take it. I can do no more than give you the girl in this way. I know you will make her a kind husband. Do not wait on account of my death; but there will be a chaplain in the fort, before the season closes, and let him marry you at once. My brother, if living, will wish to go back to his vessel, and then the child will have no protector. Mabel, your husband will have been my friend, and that will be some consolation to you, I hope."

"Trust this matter to me, sarjeant," put in Pathfinder; "leave it all in my hands, as your dying request; and depend on it, all will go as it should."

"I do—I do put all confidence in you, my trusty friend, and empower you to act, as I could act, myself, in every

particular. Mabel, child—hand me the water—you will never repent this night. Bless you, my daughter—God bless, and have you in his holy keeping!”

This tenderness was inexpressibly touching to one of Mabel's feelings; and she felt at that moment, as if her future union with Pathfinder had received a solemnization that no ceremony of the church could render more holy. Still, a weight, as that of a mountain, lay upon her heart, and she thought it would be happiness to die. Then followed a short pause, when the serjeant, in broken sentences, briefly related what had passed, since he parted with Pathfinder and the Delaware. The wind had come more favourable, and instead of encamping on an island, agreeably to the original intention, he had determined to continue, and reach the station, that night. Their approach would have been unseen, and a portion of the calamity avoided, he thought, had they not grounded on the point of a neighbouring island, where, no doubt, the noise made by the men, in getting off the boat, gave notice of their approach, and enabled the enemy to be in readiness to receive them. They had landed without the slightest suspicion of danger, though surprised at not finding a sentinel, and had actually left their arms in the boat, with the intention of first securing their knapsacks and provisions. The fire had been so close, that notwithstanding the obscurity, it was very deadly. Every man had fallen, though two or three subsequently arose, and disappeared. Four or five of the soldiers had been killed, or so nearly so, as to survive but a few minutes; though, for some unknown reason, the enemy did not make the usual rush for the scalps. Serjeant Dunham fell with the others; and he had heard the voice of Mabel, as she rushed from the block-house. This frantic appeal aroused all his parental feelings, and had enabled him to crawl as far as the door of the building, where he had raised himself against the logs, in the manner already mentioned.

After this simple explanation was made, the serjeant was so weak as to need repose, and his companions, while they ministered to his wants, suffered some time to pass in silence. Pathfinder took the occasion to reconnoitre from the loops and the roof, and he examined the condition of the rifles, of which there were a dozen kept in the building, the soldiers having used their regimental muskets in the expedition. But

Mabel never left her father's side for an instant, and when, by his breathing, she fancied he slept, she bent her knees and prayed.

The half hour that succeeded was awfully solemn and still. The moccasin of Pathfinder was barely heard over head, and occasionally the sound of the breech of a rifle fell upon the floor, for he was busied in examining the pieces, with a view to ascertain the state of their charges, and their primings. Beyond this nothing was so loud as the breathing of the wounded man. Mabel's heart yearned to be in communication with the father she was so soon to lose, and yet she would not disturb his apparent repose. But Dunham slept not; he was in that state when the world suddenly loses its attractions, its illusions, and its power; and the unknown future fills the mind with its conjectures, its revelations and its immensity. He had been a moral man for one of his mode of life, but he had thought little of this all-important moment. Had the din of battle been ringing in his ears, his martial ardour might have endured to the end; but there, in the silence of that nearly untenanted block-house, with no sound to enliven him, no appeal to keep alive factitious sentiment, no hope of victory to impel, things began to appear in their true colours, and this state of being to be estimated at its just value. He would have given treasures for religious consolation, and yet he knew not where to turn to seek it. He thought of Pathfinder, but he distrusted his knowledge. He thought of Mabel, but for the parent to appeal to the child for such succour, appeared like reversing the order of nature. Then it was that he felt the full responsibility of the parental character, and had some clear glimpses of the manner in which he himself had discharged the trust towards an orphan child. While thoughts like these were rising in his mind, Mabel, who watched the slightest change in his breathing, heard a guarded knock at the door. Supposing it might be Chingachgook, she rose, undid two of the bars, and held the third in her hand, as she asked who was there. The answer was in her uncle's voice, and he implored her to give him instant admission. Without an instant of hesitation, she turned the bar, and Cap entered. He had barely passed the opening, when Mabel closed the door again, and secured it

as before, for practice had rendered her expert in this portion of her duties.

The sturdy seaman, when he had made sure of the state of his brother-in-law, and that Mabel, as well as himself, was safe, was softened nearly to tears. His own appearance he explained, by saying that he had been carelessly guarded, under the impression that he and the Quarter-Master were sleeping under the fumes of liquor with which they had been plied with a view to keep them quiet in the expected engagement. Muir had been left asleep, or seeming to sleep; but Cap had run into the bushes, on the alarm of the attack, and having found Pathfinder's canoe, had only succeeded, at that moment, in getting to the block-house, whither he had come with the kind intent of escaping with his niece by water. It is scarcely necessary to say, that he changed his plan, when he ascertained the state of the serjeant, and the apparent security of his present quarters.

"If the worst comes to the worst, Master Pathfinder," he said, "we must strike, and that will entitle us to receive quarter. We owe it to our manhood to hold out a reasonable time, and to ourselves to haul down the ensign in season to make saving conditions. I wished Master Muir to do the same thing, when we were captured by these chaps you call vagabonds,—and rightly are they named, for viler vagabonds do not walk the earth—"

"You've found out their characters!" interrupted Pathfinder, who was always as ready to chime in with abuse of the Mingos, as with the praises of his friends. "Now, had you fallen into the hands of the Delawares, you would have learned the difference."

"Well, to me, they seem much of a muchness; blackguards fore and aft, always excepting our friend the Serpent, who is a gentleman, for an Indian. But, when these savages made the assault on us, killing Corporal McNab and his men, as if they had been so many rabbits, Lieutenant Muir and myself took refuge in one of the holes of this here island, of which there are so many among the rocks—regular geological underground burrows made by the water, as the lieutenant says,—and there we remained stowed away like two leaguers in a ship's hold, until we gave out for want of grub. A man may say that grub is the foundation of human nature. I desired the

Quarter-Master to make terms, for we could have defended ourselves for an hour or two in the place, bad as it was; but he declined, on the ground that the knaves wouldn't keep faith, if any of them were hurt, and so there was no use in asking them to. I consented to strike, on two principles; one, that we might be said to have struck already, for running below is generally thought to be giving up the ship; and the other that we had an enemy in our stomachs that was more formidable in his attacks, than the enemy on deck. Hunger is a d——ble circumstance, as any man who has lived on it eight-and-forty hours will acknowledge."

"Uncle!" said Mabel, in a mournful voice and with an expostulatory manner, "my poor father is sadly, sadly hurt!"

"True, Magnet, true—I will sit by him, and do my best at consolation. Are the bars well fastened, girl? for, on such an occasion, the mind should be tranquil and undisturbed."

"We are safe, I believe, from all but this heavy blow of Providence."

"Well, then, Magnet, do you go up to the floor above, and try to compose yourself, while Pathfinder runs aloft and takes a look-out from the cross-trees. Your father may wish to say something to me, in private, and it may be well to leave us alone. These are solemn scenes, and inexperienced people, like myself, do not always wish what they say to be overheard."

Although the idea of her uncle's affording religious consolation by the side of a death-bed, certainly never obtruded itself on the imagination of Mabel, she thought there might be a propriety in the request, with which she was unacquainted; and she complied accordingly. Pathfinder had already ascended to the roof to make his survey, and the brothers-in-law were left alone. Cap took a seat by the side of the serjeant, and bethought him, seriously, of the grave duty he had before him. A silence of several minutes succeeded, during which brief space, the mariner was digesting the substance of his intended discourse.

"I must say, Serjeant Dunham," Cap at length commenced, in his peculiar manner, "that there has been mismanagement somewhere in this unhappy expedition, and, the present being an occasion when truth ought to be spoken, and nothing but the truth, I feel it my duty to say as much,

in plain language. In short, serjeant, on this point there cannot well be two opinions, for, seaman as I am, and no soldier, I can see several errors myself, that it needs no great education to detect."

"What would you have, brother Cap?" returned the other, in a feeble voice—"what is done, is done; and it is now too late to remedy it."

"Very true, brother Dunham, but not to repent of it; the good book tells us, it is never too late to repent; and I've always heard that this is the precious moment. If you've any thing on your mind, serjeant, hoist it out freely, for, you know, you trust it to a friend. You were my own sister's husband, and poor little Magnet is my own sister's daughter; and, living or dead, I shall always look upon you as a brother. It's a thousand pities that you didn't lie off and on, with the boats, and send a canoe ahead, to reconnoitre; in which case your command would have been saved, and this disaster would not have befallen us all. Well, serjeant, we are *all* mortal; that is some consolation, I make no doubt; and if you go before, a little, why, we must follow. Yes, that *must* give him consolation."

"I know all this, brother Cap; and hope I'm prepared to meet a soldier's fate—there is poor Mabel—"

"Ay, ay—that's a heavy drag, I know; but you would n't take her with you, if you could, serjeant; and so the better way is to make as light of the separation as you can. Mabel is a good girl, and so was her mother, before her; she was my sister, and it shall be my care to see that her daughter gets a good husband, if our lives and scalps are spared; for I suppose no one would care about entering into a family that has no scalps."

"Brother, my child is betrothed—she will become the wife of Pathfinder."

"Well, brother Dunham, every man has his opinions, and his manner of viewing things; and, to my notion, this match will be any thing but agreeable to Mabel. I have no objection to the age of the man; I'm not one of them that thinks it necessary to be a boy, to make a girl happy; but on the whole, I prefer a man of about fifty, for a husband; still, there ought not to be any circumstance between the parties to make them unhappy. Circumstances play the devil with

matrimony ; and I set it down as one, that Pathfinder don't know as much as my niece. You've seen but little of the girl, serjeant, and have not got the run of her knowledge ; but, let her pay it out freely, as she will do, when she gets to be thoroughly acquainted, and you'll fall in with but few schoolmasters that can keep their luffs in her company."

"She's a good child—a dear good child," muttered the serjeant, his eyes filling with tears—"and it is my misfortune, that I have seen so little of her."

"She is, indeed, a good girl, and knows altogether too much for poor Pathfinder, who is a reasonable man, and an experienced man, in his own way ; but who has no more idea of the main chance, than you have of spherical trigonometry, serjeant."

"Ah! brother Cap, had Pathfinder been with us, in the boats, this sad affair might not have happened!"

"That is quite likely ; for his worst enemy will allow that the man is a good guide ; but, then, serjeant, if the truth must be spoken, you have managed this expedition in a loose way, altogether : you should have hove-to off your haven, and sent in a boat to reconnoitre, as I told you before. That is a matter to be repented of ; and I tell it to you, because truth, in such a case, ought to be spoken."

"My errors are dearly paid for, brother ; and poor Mabel, I fear, will be the sufferer. I think, however, that the calamity would not have happened, had there not been treason. I fear me, brother, that Jasper Eau-douce has played us false!"

"That is just my notion ; for this fresh-water life must, sooner or later, undermine any man's morals. Lieutenant Muir and myself talked this matter over, while we lay in a bit of a hole, out here, on this island ; and we both came to the conclusion, that nothing short of Jasper's treachery could have brought us all into this infernal scrape. Well, serjeant, you had better compose your mind, and think of other matters ; for, when a vessel is about to enter a strange port, it is more prudent to think of the anchorage inside, than to be under-running all the events that have turned up, during the v'yage—there's the log-book, expressly to note all these matters in ; and what stands there, must form the column of figures that's to be posted up, for or against us. How now,

Pathfinder! is there any thing in the wind, that you come down the ladder, like an Indian in the wake of a scalp?"

The guide raised a finger for silence, and then beckoned to Cap to ascend the first ladder, and to allow Mabel to take his place at the side of the serjeant.

"We must be prudent, and we must be bold, too," he said, in a low voice. "The riptyles are in earnest in their intention to fire the block, for they know there is now nothing to be gained by letting it stand. I hear the voice of that vagabond Arrowhead, among them, and he is urging them to set about their deviltry this very night. We must be stirring, Salt-water, and doing too. Luckily, there are four or five barrels of water in the block, and these are something towards a siege. My reckoning is wrong, too, or we shall yet reap some advantage from that honest fellow's, the Serpent, being at liberty."

Cap did not wait for a second invitation, but stealing away, he was soon in the upper room, with Pathfinder, while Mabel took his post at the side of her father's humble bed. Pathfinder had opened a loop, having so far concealed the light that it would not expose him to a treacherous shot, and, expecting a summons, he stood with his face near the hole, ready to answer. The stillness that succeeded, was at length broken by the voice of Muir.

"Master Pathfinder," called out the Scotchman, "a friend summons you to a parley. Come freely to one of the loops, for you've nothing to fear, so long as you are in converse with an officer of the 55th."

"What is your will, Quarter-Master—what is your will? I know the 55th, and believe it to be a brave regiment, though I rather incline to the 60th, as my favourite, and to the Delawares more than to either. But what would you have, Quarter-Master? It must be a pressing errand that brings you under the loops of a block-house, at this hour of the night, with the sartainty of Killdeer's being inside of it."

"Oh! you'll no harm a friend, Pathfinder, I'm certain, and that's my security. You're a man of judgment, and have gained too great a name on this frontier for bravery, to feel the necessity of fool-hardiness to obtain a character. You'll very well understand, my good friend, there is as much credit to be gained by submitting gracefully, when re-

sistance becomes impossible, as by obstinately holding out contrary to the rules of war. The enemy is too strong for us, my brave comrade, and I come to counsel you to give up the block, on condition of being treated as a prisoner of war."

"I thank you for this advice, Quarter-Master, which is the more acceptable, as it costs nothing. But, I do not think it belongs to my gifts to yield a place like this, while food and water last."

"Well, I'd be the last, Pathfinder, to recommend any thing against so brave a resolution, did I see the means of maintaining it. But ye'll remember that Master Cap has fallen—"

"Not he—not he," roared the individual in question through another loop—"so far from that, Lieutenant, he has risen to the height of this here fortification, and has no mind to put his head of hair into the hands of such barbers, again, so long as he can help it. I look upon this block-house as a circumstance, and have no mind to throw it away."

"If that is a living voice," returned Muir, "I am glad to hear it, for we all thought the man had fallen in the late fearful confusion! But, master Pathfinder, although ye're enjoying the society of your friend Cap, and a great pleasure do I know it to be, by the experience of two days and a night passed in a hole in the earth, we've lost that of Serjeant Dunham, who has fallen, with all the brave men he led in the late expedition. Lundie would have it so, though it would have been more discreet and becoming to send a commissioned officer in command. Dunham was a brave man, notwithstanding, and shall have justice done his memory. In short, we have all acted for the best, and that is as much as could be said in favour of Prince Eugene, the Duke of Marlborough, or the great Earl of Stair himself."

"You're wrong ag'in, Quarter-Master, you're wrong ag'in," answered Pathfinder, resorting to a ruse to magnify his force. "The sarjeant is safe in the block too, where one might say, the whole family is collected."

"Well, I rejoice to hear it, for we had certainly counted the serjeant among the slain. If pretty Mabel is in the block still, let her not delay an instant, for Heaven's sake, in quitting it, for the enemy is about to put it to the trial by fire. Ye know the potency of that dread element, and will be act-

ing more like the discreet and experienced warrior ye're universally allowed to be, in yielding a place you canna' defend, than in drawing down ruin on yourself and companions."

"I know the potency of fire, as you call it, Quarter-Master, and am not to be told, at this late hour, that it can be used for something else besides cooking a dinner. But, I make no doubt, you've heard of the potency of Killdeer, and the man who attempts to lay a pile of brush against these logs will get a taste of his power. As for arrows, it is not in their gift to set this building on fire, for we've no shingles on our roof, but good solid logs and green bark, and plenty of water besides. The roof is so flat, too, as you know yourself, Quarter-Master, that we can walk on it, and so no danger on that score while water lasts. I'm peaceable enough if let alone, but he who endivours to burn this block over my head will find the fire squinched in his own blood."

"This is idle and romantic talk, Pathfinder, and ye'll no maintain it yourself when ye come to meditate on the realities. I hope ye'll no gainsay the loyalty or the courage of the 55th, and I feel convinced that a council of war would decide on the propriety of a surrender forthwith. Na'—na'—Pathfinder, foolhardiness is na' mair like the bravery o' Wallace or Bruce, than Albany on the Hudson is like the old town of Edinbro'."

"As each of us seems to have made up his mind, Quarter-Master, more words are useless. If the riptyles near you are disposed to set about their hellish job, let them begin at once. They can burn wood and I'll burn powder. If I were an Indian at the stake, I suppose I could brag as well as the rest of them, but my gifts and natur' being both white, my turn is rather for doing than talking. You've said quite enough, considering you carry the king's commission; and should we all be consumed, none of us will bear *you* any malice."

"Pathfinder, ye'll no be exposing Mabel, pretty Mabel Dunham, to sic' a calamity!"

"Mabel Dunham is by the side of her wounded father, and God will care for the safety of a pious child. Not a hair of her head shall fall, while my arm and sight remain true; and though *you* may trust the Mingos, Master Muir, I put no faith in them. You've a knavish Tuscarora in your

company there, who has art and malice enough to spoil the character of any tribe with which he consorts, though he found the Mingos ready ruined to his hands, I fear. But, enough said; now let each party go to the use of his means and his gifts."

Throughout this dialogue Pathfinder had kept his body covered, lest a treacherous shot should be aimed at the loop; and he now directed Cap to ascend to the roof in order to be in readiness to meet the first assault. Although the latter used sufficient diligence, he found no less than ten blazing arrows sticking to the bark, while the air was filled with the yells and whoops of the enemy. A rapid discharge of rifles followed, and the bullets came pattering against the logs, in a way to show that the struggle had indeed seriously commenced.

These were sounds, however, that appalled neither Pathfinder nor Cap, while Mabel was too much absorbed in her affliction to feel alarm. She had good sense enough, too, to understand the nature of the defences, and fully to appreciate their importance. As for her father, the familiar noises revived him, and it pained his child, at such a moment, to see that his glassy eye began to kindle, and that the blood returned to a cheek it had deserted, as he listened to the uproar. It was now Mabel first perceived that his reason began slightly to wander.

"Order up the light companies," he muttered, "and let the grenadiers charge! Do they dare to attack us in our fort? Why does not the artillery open on them?"

At that instant, the heavy report of a gun burst on the night; and the crashing of rending wood was heard, as a heavy shot tore the logs in the room above, and the whole block shook with the force of a shell that lodged in the work. The Pathfinder narrowly escaped the passage of this formidable missile, as it entered; but when it exploded, Mabel could not suppress a shriek; for she supposed all over her head, whether animate or inanimate, destroyed. To increase her horror, her father shouted, in a frantic voice, to "charge!"

"Mabel," said Pathfinder, with his head at the trap, "this is true Mingo work—more noise than injury. The vagabonds have got the howitzer we took from the French, and

have discharged it ag'in the block; but, fortunately, they have fired off the only shell we had, and there is an ind of its use, for the present. There is some confusion among the stores up in this loft, but no one is hurt. Your uncle is still on the roof; and as for myself, I've run the gauntlet of too many rifles to be skeary about such a thing as a howitzer, and that in Indian hands."

Mabel murmured her thanks, and tried to give all her attention to her father; whose efforts to rise were only counteracted by his debility. During the fearful minutes that succeeded, she was so much occupied with the care of the invalid, that she scarce heeded the clamour that reigned around her. Indeed, the uproar was so great, that, had not her thoughts been otherwise employed, confusion of faculties, rather than alarm, would probably have been the consequence.

Cap preserved his coolness admirably. He had a profound and increasing respect for the power of the savages, and even for the majesty of fresh-water, it is true; but his apprehensions of the former proceeded more from his dread of being scalped and tortured, than from any unmanly fear of death: and, as he was now on the deck of a house, if not on the deck of a ship, and knew that there was little danger of boarders, he moved about with a fearlessness, and a rash exposure of his person, that Pathfinder, had he been aware of the fact, would have been the first to condemn. Instead of keeping his body covered, agreeably to the usages of Indian warfare, he was seen on every part of the roof, dashing the water right and left, with the apparent steadiness and unconcern he would have manifested had he been a sail-trimmer, exercising his art, in a battle afloat. His appearance was one of the causes of the extraordinary clamour among the assailants; who, unused to see their enemies so reckless, opened upon him with their tongues, like the pack that has the fox in view. Still he appeared to possess a charmed life; for, though the bullets whistled around him on every side, and his clothes were several times torn, nothing cut his skin. When the shell passed through the logs below, the old sailor dropped his bucket, waved his hat, and gave three cheers; in which heroic act he was employed, as the dangerous missile exploded. This characteristic feat probably

saved his life ; for, from that instant, the Indians ceased to fire at him, and even to shoot their flaming arrows at the block—having taken up the notion simultaneously, and by common consent, that the “Salt-water” was mad ; and it was a singular effect of their magnanimity, never to lift a hand against those whom they imagined devoid of reason.

The conduct of Pathfinder was very different. Everything he did was regulated by the most exact calculation—the result of long experience, and habitual thoughtfulness. His person was kept carefully out of a line with the loops, and the spot that he selected for his look-out was one that was quite removed from danger. This celebrated guide had often been known to lead forlorn hopes ; he had once stood at the stake, suffering under the cruelties and taunts of savage ingenuity, and savage ferocity, without quailing : and legends of his exploits, coolness, and daring, were to be heard all along that extensive frontier, or wherever men dwelt, and men contended. But, on this occasion, one who did not know his history and character, might have thought his exceeding care, and studied attention to self-preservation, proceeded from an unworthy motive. But such a judge would not have understood his subject. The Pathfinder bethought him of Mabel, and of what might possibly be the consequences to that poor girl, should any casualty befall himself. But the recollection rather quickened his intellect, than changed his customary prudence. He was, in fact, one of those who was so unaccustomed to fear, that he never bethought him of the constructions others might put upon his conduct. But, while, in moments of danger, he acted with the wisdom of the serpent, it was also with the simplicity of a child.

For the first ten minutes of the assault, Pathfinder never raised the breech of his rifle from the floor, except when he changed his own position, for he well knew that the bullets of the enemy were thrown away upon the massive logs of the work ; and, as he had been at the capture of the howitzer, he felt certain that the savages had no other shell than the one found in it when the piece was taken. There existed no reason, therefore, to dread the fire of the assailants, except as a casual bullet might find a passage through a loop-hole. One or two of these accidents did occur, but the balls entered

at an angle that deprived them of all chance of doing any injury, so long as the Indians kept near the block; and, if discharged from a distance, there was scarcely the possibility of one in a hundred's striking the apertures. But, when Pathfinder heard the sound of moccasined feet, and the rustling of brush at the foot of the building, he knew that the attempt to build a fire against the logs was about to be renewed. He now summoned Cap from the roof, where indeed all the danger had ceased, and directed him to stand in readiness with his water, at a hole immediately over the spot assailed.

One less trained than our hero, would have been in a hurry to repel this dangerous attempt also, and might have resorted to his means prematurely; not so with Pathfinder. His aim was not only to extinguish the fire, about which he felt little apprehension, but to give the enemy a lesson that would render him wary during the remainder of the night. In order to effect the latter purpose, it became necessary to wait until the light of the intended conflagration should direct his aim, when he well knew that a very slight effort of his skill would suffice. The Iroquois were permitted to collect their heap of dried bush, to pile it against the block, to light it, and to return to their covers, without molestation. All that Pathfinder would suffer Cap to do was to roll a barrel filled with water to the hole immediately over the spot, in readiness to be used at the proper instant. That moment, however, did not arrive, in his judgment, until the blaze illuminated the surrounding bushes, and there had been time for his quick and practised eye to detect the forms of three or four lurking savages, who were watching the progress of the flames, with the cool indifference of men accustomed to look on human misery with apathy. Then indeed he spoke.

"Are you ready, friend Cap?" he asked. "The heat begins to strike through the crevices, and, although these green logs are not of the fiery nature of an ill-tempered man, they may be kindled into a blaze if one provokes them too much. Are you ready with the barrel?—See that it has the right cut, and that none of the water is wasted."

"All ready—" answered Cap, in the manner in which a seaman replies to such a demand.

"Then wait for the word. Never be over-impatient in a critical time, nor fool-risky in a battle. Wait for the word."

While the Pathfinder was giving these directions, he was also making his own preparations, for he saw it was time to act. Killdeer was deliberately raised, pointed, and discharged. The whole process occupied about half a minute, and, as the rifle was drawn in, the eye of the marksman was applied to the hole.

"There is one riptyle the less—" Pathfinder muttered to himself—"I've seen that vagabond afore, and know him to be a marciess devil. Well, well; the man acted according to his gifts, and he has been rewarded according to his gifts. One more of the knaves, and that will sarve the turn for to-night. When day-light appears, we may have hotter work."

All this time, another rifle was getting ready; and as Pathfinder ceased, a second savage fell. This, indeed, sufficed; for, indisposed to wait for a third visitation from the same hand, the whole band, which had been crouching in the bushes around the block, ignorant of who was, and who was not exposed to view, leaped from their covers, and fled to different places for safety.

"Now, pour away, Master Cap," said Pathfinder—"I've made my mark on the blackguards; and we shall have no no more fires lighted to-night."

"Scaldings!" cried Cap, upsetting the barrel, with a care, that at once, and completely extinguished the flames.

This ended the singular conflict; and the remainder of the night passed in peace. Pathfinder and Cap watched alternately, though neither can be said to have slept. Sleep, indeed, scarcely seemed necessary to them, for both were accustomed to protracted watchings; and there were seasons and times, when the former appeared to be literally insensible to the demands of hunger and thirst, and callous to the effects of fatigue.

Mabel watched by her father's pallet, and began to feel how much our happiness, in this world, depends even on things that are imaginary. Hitherto, she had virtually lived without a father, the connexion with her remaining parent being ideal, rather than positive; but, now that she was about to lose him, she thought, for the moment, that the world would be a void after his death, and that she could never be acquainted with happiness again.

CHAPTER X.

“There was a roaring in the wind all night;
The rain came heavily, and fell in floods;
But now the sun is rising calm and bright;
The birds are singing in the distant woods.”

WORDSWORTH.

As the light returned, Pathfinder and Cap ascended again to the roof, with a view to reconnoitre the state of things once more, on the island. This part of the block-house had a low battlement around it, which afforded a considerable protection to those who stood in its centre; the intention having been to enable marksmen to lie behind it, and to fire over its top. By making proper use, therefore, of these slight defences—slight, as to height, though abundantly ample as far as they went—the two look-outs commanded a pretty good view of the island, its covers excepted; and of most of the channels that led to the spot.

The gale was still blowing very fresh at south; and there were places in the river where its surface looked green and angry, though the wind had hardly sweep enough to raise the water into foam. The shape of the little island was generally oval, and its greatest length was from east to west. By keeping in the channels that washed it, in consequence of their several courses, and of the direction of the gale, it would have been possible for a vessel to range past the island, on either of its principal sides, and always to keep the wind very nearly abeam. These were the facts first noticed by Cap, and explained to his companion; for the hopes of both now rested on the chances of relief sent from Oswego. At this instant, while they stood gazing anxiously about them, Cap cried out in his lusty, hearty, manner—

“Sail, ho!”

Pathfinder turned quickly in the direction of his companion's face, and there, sure enough, was just visible the object of the old sailor's exclamation. The elevation enabled the two to overlook the low land of several of the adjacent islands; and the canvass of a vessel was seen through the bushes that fringed the shore of one that lay to the southward

and westward. The stranger was under what seamen call low sail; but so great was the power of the wind, that her white outlines were seen flying past the openings of the verdure, with the velocity of a fast-travelling horse; resembling a cloud driving in the heavens.

"That cannot be Jasper!" said Pathfinder, in disappointment; for he did not recognise the cutter of his friend, in the swift-passing object. "No—no—the lad is behind the hour; and that is some craft that the Frenchers have sent to aid their friends, the accursed Mingos."

"This time you are out in your reckoning, friend Pathfinder, if you never were before," returned Cap, in a manner that had lost none of its dogmatism by the critical circumstances in which they were placed. "Fresh-water or salt, that is the head of the Scud's mainsail, for it is cut with a smaller goar than common; and then you can see that the gaff has been fished—quite neatly done, I admit, but fished."

"I can see none of this, I confess," answered Pathfinder, to whom even the terms of his companion were Greek.

"No!—Well, I own that surprises me; for I thought *your* eyes could see any thing! Now, to me, nothing is plainer than that goar and that fish; and I must say, my honest friend, that, in your place, I should apprehend that my sight was beginning to fail."

"If Jasper is truly coming, I shall apprehend but little. We can make good the block against the whole Mingo nation, for the next eight or ten hours; and, with Eau-douce to cover the retreat, I shall despair of nothing. God send that the lad may not run alongside of the bank, and fall into an ambushment, as besel the sarjeant!"

"Ay; there's the danger. There ought to have been signals concerted, and an anchorage-ground buoyed out, and even a quarantine station, or a Lazaretto, would have been useful could we have made these Minks-ho respect the laws. If the lad fetches up, as you say, anywhere in the neighbourhood of this island, we may look upon the cutter as lost. And, after all, Master Pathfinder, ought we not to set down this same Jasper as a secret ally of the French, rather than as a friend of our own?—I know the serjeant views the matter in that light, and I must say this whole affair looks like treason!"

"We shall soon know, we shall soon know, Master Cap; for there indeed comes the cutter, clear of the other island, and five minutes must settle the matter. It would be no more than fair, however, if we could give the boy some sign in the way of warning. It is not right that he should fall into the trap, without a notice that it has been laid."

Anxiety and suspense, notwithstanding, prevented either from attempting to make any signal. It was not easy, truly, to see how it could be done; for the Scud came foaming through the channel, on the weather side of the island, at a rate that scarce admitted of the necessary time. Nor was any one visible on her deck to make signs to; even her helm seemed deserted, though her course was as steady as her progress was rapid.

Cap stood in silent admiration of a spectacle so unusual. But, as the Scud drew nearer, his practised eye detected the helm in play, by means of tiller-ropes, though the person who steered was concealed. As the cutter had weather-boards of some little height, the mystery was explained; no doubt remaining that her people lay behind the latter, in order to be protected from the rifles of the enemy. As this fact showed that no force, beyond that of the small crew, could be on board, Pathfinder received his companion's explanation with an ominous shake of the head.

"This proves that the Sarpent has not reached Oswego," he said, "and that we are not to expect succour from the garrison. I hope Lundie has not taken it into his head to displace the lad, for Jasper Western would be a host of himself, in such a strait. We three, Master Cap, ought to make a manful warfare—you, as a seaman, to keep up the intercourse with the cutter; Jasper, as a laker, who knows all that is necessary to be done on the water; and I, with gifts that are as good as any among the Mingos, let me be what I may in other particulars. I say, we ought to make a manful fight in Mabel's behalf."

"That we ought—and that we will," answered Cap, heartily, for he began to have more confidence in the security of his scalp, now that he saw the sun again; "I set down the arrival of the Scud as one circumstance, and the chances of Eau-douce's honesty as another. This Jasper is a young man of prudence, you find, for he keeps a good off-

ing, and seems determined to know how matters stand on the island, before he ventures to bring up."

"I have it—I have it,"—exclaimed Pathfinder with exultation,—“there lies the canoe of the Sarpent, on the cutter’s deck, and the chief has got on board, and no doubt has given a true account of our condition; for, unlike a Mingo, a Delaware is sartain to get a story right, or to hold his tongue.”

Pathfinder’s disposition to think well of the Delawares, and to think ill of the Mingos, must, by this time, be very apparent to the reader. Of the veracity of the former he entertained the highest respect, while of the latter he thought, as the more observant and intelligent classes of this country are getting pretty generally to think of certain scribblers among ourselves, who are known to have been so long in the habits of mendacity, that it is thought they can no longer tell the truth, even when they seriously make the effort.

“That canoe may not belong to the cutter,” said the capitious seaman—“Oh! Deuce had one on board, when we sailed.”

“Very true, friend Cap; but, if you know your sails and masts, by your goars and fishes, I know my canoes and my paths, by frontier knowledge. If you can see new cloth in a sail, I can see new bark in a canoe. That is the boat of the Sarpent, and the noble fellow has struck off for the garri-son, as soon as he found the block besieged, has fallen in with the Scud, and, after telling his story, has brought the cutter down here to see what can be done. The Lord grant that Jasper Western be still on board her!”

“Yes—yes—it might not be amiss; for, traitor or loyal, the lad has a handy way with him, in a gale, it must be owned.”

“And in coming over water-falls!” said Pathfinder, nudging the ribs of his companion with an elbow, and laughing in his silent but hearty manner. “We will give the boy his due, though he scalps us all with his own hand!”

The Scud was now so near, that Cap made no reply. The scene, just at that instant, was so peculiar that it merits a particular description; which may also aid the reader in forming a more accurate nature of the picture we wish to draw.

The gale was still blowing violently: many of the smaller trees bowed their tops, as if ready to descend to the earth.

while the rushing of the wind through the branches of the groves, resembled the roar of distant chariots.

The air was filled with leaves, which, at that late season, were readily driven from their stems, and flew from island to island, like flights of birds. With this exception, the spot seemed silent as the grave. That the savages still remained, was to be inferred from the fact that their canoes, together with the boats of the 55th, lay in a group, in the little cove, that had been selected as a harbour. Otherwise, not a sign of their presence was to be detected. Though taken entirely by surprise by the cutter, the sudden return of which was altogether unlooked for, so uniform and inbred were their habits of caution while on the war-path, that, the instant an alarm was given, every man had taken to his cover, with the instinct and cunning of a fox seeking his hole. The same stillness reigned in the block-house, for though Pathfinder and Cap could command a view of the channel, they took the precaution necessary to lie concealed. The unusual absence of any thing like animal life on board the Scud, too, was still more remarkable. As the Indians witnessed her apparently undirected movements, a feeling of awe gained a footing among them, and some of the boldest of their party began to distrust the issue of an expedition that had commenced so prosperously. Even Arrowhead, accustomed as he was to intercourse with the whites on both sides of the lakes, fancied there was something ominous in the appearance of this unmanned vessel, and he would gladly, at that moment, have been landed again on the main.

In the mean time, the progress of the cutter was steady and rapid. She held her way mid-channel, now inclining to the gusts, and now rising again, like the philosopher that bends to the calamities of life to resume his erect attitude as they pass away, but always piling the water beneath her bows, in foam. Although she was under so very short canvass, her velocity was great, and there could not have elapsed ten minutes between the time when her sails were first seen glancing past the trees and bushes in the distance, and the moment when she was abreast of the block-house. Cap and Pathfinder leaned forward, as the cutter came beneath their eyrie, eager to get a better view of her deck, when to the delight of both, Jasper Eau-douce sprang upon his feet, and

gave three hearty cheers. Regardless of all risk, Cap leaped upon the rampart of logs, and returned the greeting, cheer for cheer. Happily, the policy of the enemy saved the latter, for they still lay quiet, not a rifle being discharged. On the other hand, Pathfinder kept in view the useful, utterly disregarding the mere dramatic part of warfare. The moment he beheld his friend Jasper, he called out to him with stentorian lungs—

“Stand by us, lad, and the day’s our own! Give ’em a grist in yonder bushes, and you ’ll put ’em up like partridges.”

Part of this reached Jasper’s ears, but most was borne off to leeward, on the wings of the wind. By the time this was said the Scud had driven past, and in the next moment she was hid from view, by the grove in which the block-house was partially concealed.

Two anxious minutes succeeded, but, at the expiration of that brief space, the sails were again gleaming through the trees, Jasper having wore, jibed, and hauled up under the lee of the island, on the other tack. The wind was free enough, as has been already explained, to admit of this manœuvre, and the cutter catching the current under her lee bow, was breasted up to her course in a way that showed she would come out to windward of the island again, without any difficulty. This whole evolution was made with the greatest facility, not a sheet being touched, the sails trimming themselves, the rudder alone controlling the admirable machine. The object appeared to be a reconnoissance. When, however, the Scud had made the circuit of the entire island, and had again got her weatherly position, in the channel by which she had first approached, her helm was put down, and she tacked. The noise of the mainsail flapping when it filled, close reefed as it was, sounded like the report of a gun, and Cap trembled lest the seams should open.

“His Majesty gives good canvass, it must be owned,” muttered the old seaman; “and it must be owned, too, that boy handles his boat as if he were thoroughly bred! D—e, Master Pathfinder, if I believe, after all that has been reported in the matter, that this Mister Oh! Deuce got his trade on this bit of fresh-water.”

“He did; yes he did. He never saw the ocean, and has come by his calling altogether up here on Ontario. I have

often thought he has a nat'ral gift, in the way of schooners and sloops, and have respected him accordingly. As for treason, and lying, and black-hearted vices, friend Cap, Jasper Western is as free as the most virtuous of the Delaware warriors; and if you crave to see a truly honest man, you must go among that tribe to discover him."

"There he comes round!" exclaimed the delighted Cap, the Scud at this moment filling on her original tack, "and now we shall see what the boy would be at; he cannot mean to keep running up and down these passages, like a girl footing it through a country-dance!"

The Scud now kept so much away that, for a moment, the two observers on the block-house feared Jasper meant to come-to; and the savages, in their lairs, gleamed out upon her with the sort of exultation that the crouching tiger may be supposed to feel, as he sees his unconscious victim approach his bed. But Jasper had no such intention. Familiar with the shore, and acquainted with the depth of water on every part of the island, he well knew that the Scud might be run against the bank with impunity, and he ventured fearlessly so near, that as he passed through the little cove, he swept the two boats of the soldiers from their fastenings, and forced them out into the channel, towing them with the cutter. As all the canoes were fastened to the two Durham boats, by this bold and successful attempt, the savages were at once deprived of the means of quitting the island, unless by swimming, and they appeared to be instantly aware of the very important fact. Rising in a body, they filled the air with yells, and poured in a harmless fire. While up in this unguarded manner two rifles were discharged by their adversaries. One came from the summit of the block, and an Iroquois fell dead in his tracks, shot through the brain. The other came from the Scud. The last was the piece of the Delaware, but, less true than that of his friend, it only maimed an enemy for life. The people of the Scud shouted, and the savages sunk again, to a man, as if it might be into the earth.

"That was the Serpent's voice," said Pathfinder, as soon as the second piece was discharged. "I know the crack of his rifle as well as I do that of Killdeer. 'Tis a good barrel, though not sartin death. Well—well—with Chingach-

gook and Jasper on the water, and you and I in the block, friend Cap, it will be hard if we don't teach these Mingo scamps the rationality of a fight!"

All this time, the Scud was in motion. As soon as she had reached the end of the island, Jasper sent his prizes adrift; and they went down before the wind, until they stranded on a point half a mile to leeward. He then wore, and came stemming the current again, through the other passage. Those on the summit of the block could now perceive that something was in agitation on the deck of the Scud; and, to their great delight, just as the cutter came abreast of the principal cove, on the spot where most of the enemy lay, the howitzer, which composed her sole armament, was unmasked, and a shower of case-shot was sent hissing into the bushes. A bevy of quail would not have risen quicker than this unexpected discharge of iron hail put up the Iroquois; when a second savage fell by a messenger sent from Killdeer, and another went limping away, by a visit from the rifle of Chingachgook. New covers were immediately found, however; and each party seemed to prepare for the renewal of the strife in another form. But the appearance of June, bearing a white flag, and accompanied by the French officer and Muir, stayed the hands of all, and was the forerunner of another parley.

The negotiation that followed was held beneath the block-house; and so near it, as at once to put those who were uncovered completely at the mercy of Pathfinder's unerring aim. Jasper anchored directly abeam; and the howitzer, too, was kept trained upon the negotiators: so that the besieged and their friends, with the exception of the man who held the match, had no hesitation about exposing their persons. Chingachgook alone lay in ambush; more, however, from habit than distrust.

"You've triumphed, Pathfinder;" called out the Quarter-Master, "and Captain Sanglier has come himself to offer terms. You'll no be denying a brave enemy an honourable retreat, when he has fought ye fairly, and done all the credit he could to king and country. Ye are too loyal a subject, yourself, to visit loyalty and fidelity with a heavy judgment. I am authorized to offer, on the part of the enemy, an evacuation of the island, a mutual exchange of prisoners, and a

restoration of scalps. In the absence of baggage and artillery, little more can be done."

As the conversation was necessarily carried on in a high key, both on account of the wind, and on account of the distance, all that was said was heard equally by those in the block, and those in the cutter.

"What do you say to that, Jasper?" called out Pathfinder. "You hear the proposal: shall we let the vagabonds go; or shall we mark them, as they mark their sheep in the settlements, that we may know them again?"

"What has befallen Mabel Dunham?" demanded the young man, with a frown on his handsome face, that was visible even to those in the block. "If a hair of her head has been touched, it will go hard with the whole Iroquois tribe!"

"Nay, nay, she is safe below, nursing a dying parent, as becomes her sex. We owe no grudge on account of the serjeant's hurt, which comes of lawful warfare; and as for Mabel——"

"She is here," exclaimed the girl, herself, who had mounted to the roof the moment she found the direction things were taking. "She is here; and, in the name of our holy religion, and of that God whom we profess to worship in common, let there be no more bloodshed! Enough has been spilt already; and if these men will go away, Pathfinder—if they will depart peaceably, Jasper—oh! do not detain one of them. My poor father is approaching his end, and it were better that he should draw his last breath in peace with the world. Go, go, Frenchmen and Indians; we are no longer your enemies, and will harm none of you."

"Tut, tut, Magnet," put in Cap, "this sounds religious, perhaps, or like a book of poetry; but it does not sound like common sense. The enemy is just ready to strike; Jasper is anchored with his broadside to bear, and, no doubt, with springs on his cables; Pathfinder's eye and hand are as true as the needle; and we shall get prize-money, head-money, and honour in the bargain, if you will not interfere for the next half-hour."

"Well," said Pathfinder, "I incline to Mabel's way of thinking. There *has* been enough blood shed to answer our purpose, and to sarve the king; and as for honour, in that

meaning, it will do better for young ensigns and recruits, than for cool-headed, obsarvant, Christian men. There is honour in doing what's right, and unhonour in doing what's wrong ; and I think it wrong to take the life, even of a Mingo, without a useful end in view, I do ; and right to hear reason at all times. So, Lieutenant Muir, let us know what your friends, the Frenchers and Indians have to say for themselves."

"My friends!" said Muir, starting. "You'll no be calling the king's enemies my friends, Pathfinder, because the fortune of war has thrown me into their hands? Some of the greatest warriors, both of ancient and modern times, have been prisoners of war ; and yon is Master Cap, who can testify whether we did not do all that men could devise to escape the calamity."

"Ay—ay," drily answered Cap,—“escape is the proper word. We ran below and hid ourselves, and so discreetly, that we might have remained in the hole to this hour, had it not been for the necessity of re-stowing the bread lockers. You burrowed on that occasion, Quarter-Master, as handily as a fox ; and how the d——l you knew so well where to find the spot, is a matter of wonder to me. A regular skulk on board ship, does not trail aft more readily, when the jib is to be stowed, than you went into that same hole !”

"And did ye no follow? There are moments in a man's life when reason ascends to instinct—”

"And men descend into holes," interrupted Cap, laughing in his boisterous way, while Pathfinder chimed in, in his peculiar manner. Even Jasper, though still filled with concern for Mabel, was obliged to smile. "They say the d——l wouldn't make a sailor if he didn't look aloft, and now it seems he'll not make a soldier if he doesn't look below !”

This burst of merriment, though it was any thing but agreeable to Muir, contributed largely towards keeping the peace. Cap fancied he had said a thing much better than common, and that disposed him to yield his own opinion on the main point, so long as he got the good opinion of his companions on his novel claim to be a wit. After a short discussion, all the savages on the island were collected in a body, without arms, at the distance of a hundred yards from the block, and under the gun of the Scud, while Pathfinder descended to the door of the block-house, and settled the

terms on which the island was to be finally evacuated by the enemy. Considering all the circumstances, the conditions were not very discreditable to either party. The Indians were compelled to give up all their arms, even to their knives and tomahawks, as a measure of precaution, their force being still quadruple that of their foes. The French officer, Monsieur Sanglier, as he was usually styled, and chose to call himself, remonstrated against this act, as one likely to reflect more discredit on his command than any other part of the affair; but Pathfinder, who had witnessed one or two Indian massacres, and knew how valueless pledges became when put in opposition to interest, where a savage was concerned, was obdurate. The second stipulation was of nearly the same importance. It compelled Captain Sanglier to give up all his prisoners, who had been kept well guarded, in the very hole, or cave, in which Cap and Muir had taken refuge. When these men were produced, four of them were found to be unhurt; they had fallen merely to save their lives, a common artifice in that species of warfare, and of the remainder, two were so slightly injured as not to be unfit for service. As they brought their muskets with them, this addition to his force immediately put Pathfinder at his ease, for having collected all the arms of the enemy in the block-house, he directed these men to take possession of the building, stationing a regular sentinel at the door. The remainder of the soldiers were dead, the badly wounded having been instantly dispatched in order to obtain the much-coveted scalps.

As soon as Jasper was made acquainted with the terms, and the preliminaries had been so far observed as to render it safe for him to be absent, he got the Scud under way, and running down to the point where the boats had stranded, he took them in tow again, and, making a few stretches, brought them into the leeward passage. Here all the savages instantly embarked, when Jasper took the boats in tow a third time, and running off before the wind, he soon set them adrift, quite a mile to leeward of the island. The Indians were furnished with but a single oar in each boat to steer with, the young sailor well knowing that, by keeping before the wind, they would land on the shores of Canada in the course of the morning.

Captain Sanglier, Arrowhead, and June, alone remained,

when this disposition had been made of the rest of the party ; the former having certain papers to draw up and sign with Lieutenant Muir, who, in his eyes, possessed the virtues which are attached to a commission, and the latter preferring, for reasons of his own, not to depart in company with his late friends, the Iroquois. Canoes were retained, for the departure of these three, when the proper moment should arrive.

In the mean time, or while the Scud was running down with the boats in tow, Pathfinder and Cap, aided by proper assistants, busied themselves with preparing a breakfast ; most of the party not having eaten for four-and-twenty hours. The brief space that passed in this manner, before the Scud came to again, was little interrupted by discourse, though Pathfinder found leisure to pay a visit to the serjeant, to say a few friendly words to Mabel, and to give such directions as he thought might smooth the passage of the dying man. As for Mabel, herself, he insisted on her taking some light refreshment, and there no longer existing any motive for keeping it there, he had the guard removed from the block, in order that the daughter might have no impediment to her attentions to her father. These little arrangements completed, our hero returned to the fire, around which he found all the remainder of the party assembled, including Jasper.

CHAPTER XI.

"You saw but sorrow in its waning form,
A working sea remaining from a storm
Where now the weary waves roll o'er the deep,
And faintly murmur ere they fall asleep."

DRYDEN.

MEN accustomed to a warfare like that we have been describing, are not apt to be much under the influence of the tender feelings, while still in the field. Notwithstanding their habits, however, more than one heart was with Mabel in the block, while the incidents we are about to relate were in the course of occurrence, and even the indispensable meal was

less relished by the hardiest of the soldiers, than it might have been had not the serjeant been so near his end.

As Pathfinder returned from the block, he was met by Muir, who led him aside in order to hold a private discourse. The manner of the Quarter-Master had that air of supererogatory courtesy about it, which almost invariably denotes artifice; for, while physiognomy and phrenology are but lame sciences at the best, and perhaps lead to as many false as right conclusions, we hold that there is no more infallible evidence of insincerity of purpose, short of overt acts, than a face that smiles when there is no occasion, and the tongue that is out of measure smooth. Muir had much of this manner in common, mingled with an apparent frankness, that his Scottish intonation of voice, Scottish accent, and Scottish modes of expression, were singularly adapted to sustain. He owed his preferment, indeed, to a long-exercised deference to Lundie and his family; for, while the Major himself was much too acute to be the dupe of one so much his inferior in real talents and attainments, most persons are accustomed to make liberal concessions to the flatterer, even while they distrust his truth, and are perfectly aware of his motives. On the present occasion, the contest in skill was between two men as completely the opposites of each other, in all the leading essentials of character, as very well could be. Pathfinder was as simple, as the Quarter-Master was practised; he was as sincere as the other was false, and as direct as the last was tortuous. Both were cool and calculating, and both were brave, though in different modes and degrees; Muir never exposing his person except for effect, while the guide included fear among the rational passions, or as a sensation to be deferred to only when good might come of it.

“My dearest friend,” Muir commenced, “for ye’ll be dearer to us all, by seventy and seven-fold, after your late conduct, than ever ye were, ye’ve just established yourself, in this late transaction! It’s true, that they’ll not be making ye a commissioned officer, for that species of prefairment is not much in your line, nor much in your wishes, I’m thinking; but as a guide, and a counsellor, and a loyal subject, and an expert marksman, yer’ renown may be said to be full. I doubt if the commander-in-chief will carry away

with him from America, as much credit as will fall to yer' share, and ye ought just to sit down in content, and enjoy yourself for the remainder of yer' days. Get married, man, without delay, and look to your precious happiness, for ye've no occasion to look any longer to your glory. Take Mabel Dunham, for Heaven's sake, to your bosom, and ye'll have both a bonny bride, and a bonny reputation."

"Why, Quarter-Master, this is a new piece of advice to come from your mouth!—They've told me I had a rival in you!"

"And ye had, man; and a formidable one, too, I can tell ye! One that has never yet courted in vain, and yet one that has courted five times. Lundie twits me with four, and I deny the charge; but he little thinks the truth would outdo even his arithmetic! Yes, yes; ye had a rival, Pathfinder, but ye've one no longer in me. Ye've my hearty wishes for yer' success with Mabel, and were the honest serjeant likely to survive, ye might rely on my good word with him, too, for a certainty."

"I feel your friendship, Quarter-Master, I feel your friendship, though I have no great need of any favour with Serjeant Dunham, who has long been my friend. I believe we may look upon the matter to be as sartain as most things in war-time; for Mabel and her father consenting, the whole 55th couldn't very well put a stop to it. Ah's me! the poor father will scarcely live to see what his heart has so long been set upon!"

"But he'll have the consolation of knowing it will come to pass, in dying. Oh! it's a great relief, Pathfinder, for the parting spirit to feel certain that the beloved ones left behind, will be well provided for, after its departure. All the Mistress Muirs have duly expressed that sentiment, with their dying breaths."

"All your wives, Quarter-Master, have been likely to feel this consolation!"

"Out upon ye, man,—I'd no thought ye such a wag! Well, well; pleasant words make no heart-burnings between auld fri'nds. If I cannot espouse Mabel, ye'll no object to my esteeming her, and speaking well of her, and of yoursal', too, on all suitable occasions, and in all companies. But, Pathfinder, ye'll easily understan' that a poor deevil, who

loses such a bride, will probably stand in need of some consolation?"

"Quite likely—quite likely, Quarter-Master," returned the simple-minded guide; "I know the loss of Mabel would be found heavy to be borne by myself. It may bear hard on your feelings to see us married, but the death of the sarjeant will be likely to put it off, and you'll have time to think more manfully of it, you will."

"I'll bear up against it—yes, I'll bear up against it, though my heart-strings crack; and ye might help me, man, by giving me something to do. Ye'll understand that this expedition has been of a very peculiar nature, for here am I, bearing the king's commission, just a volunteer, as it might be; while a mere orderly has had the command. I've submitted for various reasons, though my blood has boiled to be in authority, while ye war' battling for the honour of the country, and his Majesty's rights—"

"Quarter-Master," interrupted the guide, "you fell so early into the enemy's hands, that your conscience ought to be easily satisfied on that score; so take my advice, and say nothing about it."

"That's just my opinion, Pathfinder; we'll all say nothing about it. Serjeant Dunham is *hors-de-combat*—"

"Anan!" said the guide.

"Why the serjeant can command no longer, and it will hardly do to leave a corporal at the head of a victorious party, like this; for flowers that will bloom in a garden will die on a heath; and I was just thinking I would claim the authority that belongs to one who holds a lieutenant's commission. As for the men, they'll no dare to raise any objection, and as for yoursal', my dear friend, now that ye've so much honour, and Mabel, and the consciousness of having done yer' duty, which is more precious than all, I expect to find an ally rather than one to oppose the plan."

"As for commanding the soldiers of the 55th, lieutenant, it is your right, I suppose, and no one here will be likely to gainsay it; though you've been a prisoner of war, and there are men who might stand out ag'in giving up their authority to a prisoner released by their own deeds. Still no one here will be likely to say any thing hostile to your wishes."

"That's just it, Pathfinder; and when I come to draw up

the report of our success against the boats, and the defence of the block, together with the general operations, including the capitulation, ye'll no find any omission of your claims and merits."

"Tut, for my claims and merits, Quarter-Master! Lundie knows what I am in the forest, and what I am in the fort; and the general knows better than he. No fear of me; tell your own story, only taking care to do justice by Mabel's father, who, in one sense, is the commanding officer at this very moment."

Muir expressed his entire satisfaction with this arrangement, as well as his determination to do justice by all, when the two went to the group that was assembled round the fire. Here the Quarter-Master began, for the first time since leaving Oswego, to assume some of the authority that might properly be supposed to belong to his rank. Taking the remaining corporal aside, he distinctly told that functionary that he must in future be regarded as one holding the king's commission, and directed him to acquaint his subordinates with the new state of things. This change in the dynasty was effected without any of the usual symptoms of a revolution; for as all well understood the lieutenant's legal claims to command, no one felt disposed to dispute his orders. For reasons best known to themselves, Lundie and the Quarter-Master had, originally, made a different disposition, and now, for reasons of his own, the latter had seen fit to change it. This was reasoning enough for soldiers, though the hurt received by Serjeant Dunham would have sufficiently explained the circumstance, had an explanation been required.

All this time Captain Sanglier was looking after his own breakfast, with the resignation of a philosopher, the coolness of a veteran, the ingenuity and science of a Frenchman, and the voracity of an ostrich. This person had now been in the colony some thirty years, having left France in some such situation in his own army, as Muir filled in the 55th. An iron constitution, perfect obduracy of feeling, a certain address well suited to manage savages, and an indomitable courage, had early pointed him out to the commander-in-chief, as a suitable agent to be employed in directing the military operations of his Indian allies. In this capacity, then, he had risen to the titular rank of captain, and, with

his promotion, had acquired a portion of the habits and opinions of his associates, with a facility and an adaptation of self, that are thought, in this part of the world, to be peculiar to his countrymen. He had often led parties of the Iroquois in their predatory expeditions; and his conduct on such occasions exhibited the contradictory results of both alleviating the misery produced by this species of warfare, and of augmenting it, by the broader views and greater resources of civilization. In other words, he planned enterprises that, in their importance and consequences, much exceeded the usual policy of the Indians, and then stepped in to lessen some of the evils of his own creating. In short, he was an adventurer whom circumstances had thrown into a situation, where the callous qualities of men of his class might readily show themselves, for good or for evil; and he was not of a character to baffle fortune by any ill-timed squeamishness on the score of early impressions, or to trifle with her liberality, by unnecessarily provoking her frowns through wanton cruelty. Still, as his name was unavoidably connected with many of the excesses committed by his parties, he was generally considered, in the American Provinces, a wretch who delighted in bloodshed, and who found his greatest happiness in tormenting the helpless and the innocent; and the name of Sanglier, which was a soubriquet of his own adopting, or of Flint Heart, as he was usually termed on the borders, had got to be as terrible to the women and children of that part of the country, as those of Butler and Brandt became at a later day.

The meeting between Pathfinder and Sanglier bore some resemblance to that celebrated interview between Wellington and Blucher, which has been so often and graphically told. It took place at the fire; and the parties stood earnestly regarding each other for more than a minute without speaking. Each felt that in the other, he saw a formidable foe; and each felt, while he ought to treat the other with the manly liberality due to a warrior, that there was little in common between them, in the way of character, as well as of interests. One served for money and preferment; the other, because his life had been cast in the wilderness, and the land of his birth needed his arm and experience. The desire of rising above his present situation, never disturbed

the tranquillity of Pathfinder; nor had he ever known an ambitious thought, as ambition usually betrays itself, until he became acquainted with Mabel. Since then, indeed, distrust of himself, reverence for her, and the wish to place her in a situation above that which he then filled, had caused him some uneasy moments; but the directness and simplicity of his character had early afforded the required relief; and he soon came to feel, that the woman who would not hesitate to accept him for her husband, would not scruple to share his fortunes, however humble. He respected Sanglier as a brave warrior; and he had far too much of that liberality which is the result of practical knowledge, to believe half of what he had heard to his prejudice; for the most bigoted and illiberal on every subject, are usually those who know nothing about it; but he could not approve of his selfishness, cold-blooded calculations, and, least of all, of the manner in which he forgot his "white gifts," to adopt those that were purely "red." On the other hand, Pathfinder was a riddle to Captain Sanglier. The latter could not comprehend the other's motives; he had often heard of his disinterestedness, justice, and truth; and, in several instances, they had led him into grave errors, on that principle by which a frank and open-mouthed diplomatist is said to keep his secrets better than one that is close-mouthed and wily.

After the two heroes had gazed at each other, in the manner mentioned, Monsieur Sanglier touched his cap; for the rudeness of a border life had not entirely destroyed the courtesy of manner he had acquired in youth, nor extinguished that appearance of *bonhomie* which seems inbred in a Frenchman.

"Monsieur le Pathfinder," he said with a very decided accent, though with a friendly smile, "*un militaire honore le courage, et la loyauté.* You speak Iroquois?"

"Ay, I understand the language of the riptyles, and can get along with it, if there's occasion," returned the literal and truth-telling guide; "but it's neither a tongue nor a tribe to my taste. Wherever you find the Mingo blood, in my opinion, Master Flinty-heart, you find a knave. Well, I've seen you often, though it was in battle; and I must say, it was always in the van. You must know most of our bullets by sight?"

"Nevvair, sair, your own; *une balle* from your honourable hand, be sairtaine deat'. You kill my best warrior on some island."

"That may be—that may be—though I dare say, if the truth was known, they would turn out to be great rascals. No offence to you, Master Flinty-heart, but you keep desperate evil company."

"Yes, sair," returned the Frenchman, who, bent on saying that which was courteous, himself, and comprehending with difficulty, was disposed to think he received a compliment—"you too good. But, *un brave* always *comme ça*. What that mean—ha!—what that *jeune homme* do?"

The hand and eye of Captain Sanglier directed the look of Pathfinder to the opposite side of the fire, where Jasper, just at that moment, had been rudely seized by two of the soldiers, who were binding his arms, under the direction of Muir.

"What does that mean, indeed?" cried the guide, stepping forward, and shoving the two subordinates away with a power of muscle that would not be denied. "Who has the heart to do this to Jasper Eau-douce; and who has the boldness to do it before my eyes?"

"It is by my orders, Pathfinder," answered the Quarter-Master; "and I command it on my own responsibility. Ye'll no tak' on yourself to dispute the legality of orders given by one who bears the king's commission to the king's soldiers?"

"I'd dispute the king's words, if they came from the king's own mouth, did he say that Jasper deserves this. Has not the lad just saved all our scalps?—taken us from defeat, and given us victory? No, no, Lieutenant; if this is the first use that you make of your authority, I, for one, will not respect it."

"This savours a little of insubordination," answered Muir; "but we can bear much from Pathfinder. It is true this Jasper has *seemed* to serve us in this affair; but we ought not to overlook past transactions. Did not Major Duncan himself denounce him to Serjeant Dunham, before we left the post? Have we not seen sufficient with our own eyes, to make sure of having been betrayed? And is it not natural, and almost necessary, to believe that this young man

has been the traitor? Ah! Pathfinder, ye'll no be making yourself a great statesman, or a great captain, if you put too much faith in appearances. Lord bless me!—Lord bless me! if I do not believe, could the truth be come at, as you often say yourself, Pathfinder, that hypocrisy is a more common vice than even envy; and that's the bane o' human nature."

Captain Sanglier shrugged his shoulders; then he looked earnestly from Jasper towards the Quarter-Master, and from the Quarter-Master towards Jasper.

"I care not for your envy, or your hypocrisy, or even for your human natur'," returned Pathfinder. "Jasper Eau-douce is my friend; Jasper Eau-douce is a brave lad, and an honest lad, and a loyal lad; and no man of the 55th shall lay hands on him, short of Lundie's own orders, while I'm in the way to prevent it. You may have authority over your soldiers, but you have none over Jasper, or me, Master Muir."

"*Bon*," ejaculated Sanglier; the sound partaking equally of the energies of the throat, and of the nose.

"Will ye no hearken to reason, Pathfinder? Ye'll no be forgetting our suspicions and judgments; and here is another circumstance to augment and aggravate them all. Ye can see this little bit of bunting; well, where should it be found, but by Mabel Dunham, on the branch of a tree, on this very island, just an hour or so before the attack of the enemy; and if ye'll be at the trouble to look at the fly of the Scud's ensign, ye'll just say that the cloth has been cut from out it. Circumstantial evidence was never stronger."

"*Ma foi, c'est un peu fort, ceci*;" growled Sanglier, between his teeth.

"Talk to me of no ensigns, and signals, when I know the heart;" continued the Pathfinder. "Jasper has the gift of honesty; and it is too rare a gift to be trifled with, like a Mingo's conscience. No, no; off hands, or we shall see which can make the stoutest battle—you, and your men of the 55th, or the Sarpent, here, and Killdeer, with Jasper and his crew. You overrate your force, Lieutenant Muir, as much as you underrate Eau-douce's truth."

"*Très bon!*"

"Well, if I must speak plainly, Pathfinder, I e'en must.

Captain Sanglier, here, and Arrowhead, this brave Tuscarora, have both informed me that this unfortunate boy is the traitor. After such testimony, you can no longer oppose my right to correct him, as well as the necessity of the act."

"*Scélérat*," muttered the Frenchman.

"Captain Sanglier is a brave soldier, and will not gainsay the conduct of an honest sailor," put in Jasper. "Is there any traitor here, Captain Flinty-heart?"

"Ay," added Muir, "let him speak out then, since ye wish it, unhappy youth; that the truth may be known. I only hope that ye may escape the last punishment when a court will be sitting on your misdeeds. How is it, Captain; do ye, or do ye not see a traitor amang us?"

"*Oui*—yes, *sair—bien sûr*."

"Too much lie"—said Arrowhead, in a voice of thunder, striking the breast of Muir, with the back of his own hand, in a sort of ungovernable gesture. "Where my warriors?—where Yengeese scalp?—Too much lie."

Muir wanted not for personal courage, nor for a certain sense of personal honour. The violence which had been intended only for a gesture, he mistook for a blow; for conscience was suddenly aroused within him; and he stepped back a pace, extending a hand towards a gun. His face was livid with rage; and his countenance expressed the fell intention of his heart. But Arrowhead was too quick for him. With a wild glance of the eye, the Tuscarora looked about him; then thrust a hand beneath his own girdle, drew forth a concealed knife, and, in the twinkling of an eye, buried it in the body of the Quarter-Master to the handle. As the latter fell at his feet, gazing into his face with the vacant stare of one surprised by death, Sanglier took a pinch of snuff, and said, in a calm voice:—

"*Voilà l'affaire finie—mais*"—shrugging his shoulders, "*ce n'est qu'un scélérat de moins*."

The act was too sudden to be prevented, and when Arrowhead, uttering a yell, bounded into the bushes, the white men were too confounded to follow. Chingachgook, however, was more collected; and the bushes had scarcely closed on the passing body of the Tuscarora, than they were again opened by that of the Delaware in full pursuit.

Jasper Western spoke French fluently, and the words and manner of Sanglier struck him.

"Speak, Monsieur," he said, in English, "am I the traitor?"

"*Le voilà*"—answered the cool Frenchman,—"*dat is our espion—our agent—our friend—ma foi—c'était un grand scélérat—voici.*"

While speaking, Sanglier bent over the dead body, and thrust a hand into a pocket of the Quarter-Master, out of which he drew a purse. Emptying the contents on the ground, several double-Louis rolled towards the soldiers, who were not slow in picking them up. Casting the purse from him, in contempt, the soldier of fortune turned towards the soup he had been preparing with so much care, and finding it to his liking, he began to break his fast, with an air of indifference that the most stoical Indian warrior might have envied.

CHAPTER XII.

"The only amaranthine flower on earth
Is virtue; th' only lasting treasure, truth."

COWPER.

THE reader must imagine some of the occurrences, that followed the sudden death of Muir. While his body was in the hands of his soldiers, who laid it decently aside, and covered it with a great-coat, Chingachgook silently resumed his place at the fire, and both Sanglier and Pathfinder remarked that he carried a fresh and bleeding scalp at his girdle. No one asked any questions, and the former, although perfectly satisfied that Arrowhead had fallen, manifested neither curiosity nor feeling. He continued calmly eating his soup, as if the meal had been tranquil as usual. There was something of pride, and of an assumed indifference to fate, imitated from the Indians, in all this; but there was more that really resulted from practice, habitual self-command, and constitutional hardihood. With Pathfinder,

the case was a little different in feeling, though much the same in appearance. He disliked Muir, whose smooth-tongued courtesy was little in accordance with his own frank and ingenuous nature; but he had been shocked at his unexpected and violent death, though accustomed to similar scenes, and he had been surprised at the exposure of his treachery. With a view to ascertain the extent of the latter, as soon as the body was removed, he began to question the captain on the subject. The latter having no particular motive for secrecy, now that his agent was dead, in the course of the breakfast revealed the following circumstances, which will serve to clear up some of the minor incidents of our tale.

Soon after the 55th appeared on the frontiers, Muir had volunteered his services to the enemy. In making his offers, he boasted of his intimacy with Lundie, and of the means it afforded of furnishing more accurate and important information than usual. His terms had been accepted, and Monsieur Sanglier had several interviews with him, in the vicinity of the fort at Oswego, and had actually passed one entire night secreted in the garrison. Arrowhead, however, was the usual channel of communication, and the anonymous letter to Major Duncan, had been originally written by Muir, transmitted to Frontenac, copied, and sent back by the Tuscarora, who was returning from that errand when captured by the Scud. It is scarcely necessary to add, that Jasper was to be sacrificed, in order to conceal the Quarter-Master's treason, and that the position of the island had been betrayed to the enemy by the latter. An extraordinary compensation, that which was found in his purse, had induced him to accompany the party under Serjeant Dunham, in order to give the signals that were to bring on the attack. The disposition of Muir towards the sex, was a natural weakness, and he would have married Mabel, or any one else, who would accept his hand; but his admiration of her was in a great degree feigned, in order that he might have an excuse for accompanying the party, without sharing in the responsibility of its defeat, or incurring the risk of having no other strong and seemingly sufficient motive. Much of this was known to Captain Sanglier, particularly the part in connexion with Mabel, and he did not fail to let his auditors into the whole secret, frequently laughing in a sarcastic manner, as he re-

vealed the different expedients of the luckless Quarter-Master.

"*Touchez-la*," said the cold-blooded partisan, holding out his sinewy hand to Pathfinder, when he ended his explanations—"you be *honnête*, and dat is *beaucoup*. We tak' de spy, as we tak' *la médecine*, for de good; mais, *je les déteste! Touchez-la*."

"I'll shake your hand, captain, I will, for you're a lawful and nat'ral inimy," returned Pathfinder, "and a manful one; but the body of the Quarter-Master shall never disgrace English ground. I did intend to carry it back to Lundie, that he might play his bagpipes over it; but now it shall lie here, on the spot where he acted his villany, and have his own treason for a head-stone. Captain Flinty-Heart, I suppose this consorting with traitors is a part of a soldier's regular business; but, I tell you honestly, it is not to my liking, and I'd rather it should be you than I who had this affair on his conscience. What an awful sinner!—To plot, right and left, ag'in country, friends and the Lord!—Jasper, boy, a word with you, aside, for a single minute."

Pathfinder now led the young man apart, and squeezing his hand, with the tears in his own eyes, he continued—

"You know me, Eau-douce, and I know you," he said, "and this news has not changed my opinion of you, in any manner. I never believed their tales, though it looked solemn at one minute, I will own; yes, it did look solemn; and it made me feel solemn, too. I never suspected you for a minute, for I know your gifts don't lie that-a-way; but, I must own, I didn't suspect the Quarter-Master neither."

"And he holding His Majesty's commission, Pathfinder!"

"It isn't so much that, Jasper Western; it isn't so much that. He held a commission from God to act right, and to deal fairly with his fellow-creatur's, and he has failed awfully in his duty!"

"To think of his pretending love for one like Mabel, too, when he felt none!"

"That was bad, sartainly; the fellow must have had Mingo blood in his veins. The man that deals unfairly by a woman can be but a mongrel, lad; for the Lord has made them helpless on purpose that we may gain their love by kindness and sarvices. Here is the sarjeant, poor man, on

his dying bed ; he has given me his daughter for a wife, and Mabel, dear girl, she has consented to it ; and it makes me feel that I have two welfares to look after, two natur's to care for, and two hearts to gladden. Ah's me ! Jasper ; I sometimes feel that I'm not good enough for that sweet child !"

Eau-douce had nearly gasped for breath when he first heard this intelligence ; and, though he succeeded in suppressing any other outward signs of agitation, his cheek was blanched nearly to the paleness of death. Still he found means to answer, not only with firmness, but with energy—

"Say not so, Pathfinder ; you are good enough for a Queen."

"Ay, ay, boy, according to your idees of my goodness ; that is to say—I can kill a deer, or even a Mingo at need, with any man on the lines ; or I can follow a forest path with as true an eye, or read the stars, when others do not understand them. No doubt, no doubt, Mabel will have venison enough, and fish enough, and pigeons enough ; but will she have knowledge enough, and will she have idees enough, and pleasant conversation enough, when life comes to drag a little, and each of us begins to pass for our true value ?"

"If you pass for your value, Pathfinder, the greatest lady in the land would be happy with you. On that head, you have no reason to feel afraid."

"Now, Jasper, I dare to say *you* think so—nay, I *know* you do ; for it is nat'ral and according to friendship, for people to look over-favourably at them they love. Yes, yes ; if I had to marry you, boy, I should give myself no consarn about my being well looked upon, for you have always shown a disposition to see me and all I do with friendly eyes. But a young gal, after all, must wish to marry a man that is nearer to her own age and fancies, than to have one old enough to be her father, and rude enough to frighten her. I wonder, Jasper, that Mabel never took a fancy to you, now, rather than setting her mind on me !"

"Take a fancy to me, Pathfinder !" returned the young man, endeavouring to clear his voice without betraying himself—"What is there about me, to please such a girl as Mabel Dunham ? I have all that you find fault with in yourself, with none of that excellence that makes even the generals respect you."

“Well—well—it’s all chance, say what we will about it. Here have I journeyed and guided through the woods, female after female, and consorted with them in the garrisons, and never have I even felt an inclination for any, until I saw Mabel Dunham. It’s true the poor sarjeant first set me to thinking about his daughter, but after we got a little acquainted like, I’d no need of being spoken to, to think of her night and day. I’m tough, Jasper; yes, I’m very tough; and I’m risolute enough, as you all know; and yet I do think it would quite break me down, now, to lose Mabel Dunham!”

“We will talk no more of it, Pathfinder,” said Jasper, returning his friend’s squeeze of the hand, and moving back towards the fire, though slowly and in the manner of one who cared little where he went; “we will talk no more of it. You are worthy of Mabel, and Mabel is worthy of you—you like Mabel, and Mabel likes you—her father has chosen you for her husband, and no one has a right to interfere. As for the Quarter-Master, his feigning love for Mabel, is worse even than his treason to the king!”

By this time, they were so near the fire, that it was necessary to change the conversation. Luckily, at that instant, Cap, who had been in the block in company with his dying brother-in-law, and who knew nothing of what had passed since the capitulation, now appeared, walking with a meditative and melancholy air towards the group. Much of that hearty dogmatism, that imparted even to his ordinary air and demeanour an appearance of something like contempt for all around him, had disappeared, and he seemed thoughtful, if not meek.

“This death, gentlemen,” he said, when he had got sufficiently near, “is a melancholy business, make the best of it. Now, here is Serjeant Dunham, a very good soldier, I make no question, about to slip his cable, and yet he holds on to the better end of it, as if he was determined it should never run out of the hawse-hole; and all because he loves his daughter, it seems to me. For my part, when a friend is really under the necessity of making a long journey, I always wish him well and happily off.”

“You wouldn’t kill the sarjeant before his time?” Pathfinder reproachfully answered. “Life is sweet, even to the aged, and, for that matter, I’ve known some that seemed to set much store by it, when it got to be of the least value.”

Nothing had been farther from Cap's real thoughts, than the wish to hasten his brother-in-law's end. He had found himself embarrassed with the duties of smoothing a death-bed, and all he had meant was to express a sincere desire that the serjeant were happily rid of doubt and suffering. A little shocked, therefore, at the interpretation that had been put on his words, he rejoined with some of the asperity of the man, though rebuked by a consciousness of not having done his own wishes justice—

“You are too old and too sensible a person, Pathfinder,” he said, “to fetch a man up with a surge, when he is paying out his ideas in distress, as it might be. Serjeant Dunham is both my brother-in-law and my friend,—that is to say, as intimate a friend as a soldier well can be with a seafaring man, and I respect and honour him accordingly. I make no doubt, moreover, that he has lived such a life as becomes a man, and there can be no great harm, after all, in wishing any one well berthed in heaven. Well! we are mortal the best of us, that you'll not deny; and it ought to be a lesson not to feel pride in our strength and beauty. Where is the Quarter-Master, Pathfinder?—It is proper he should come and have a parting word with the poor serjeant, who is only going a little before us.”

“You have spoken more truth, Master Cap, than you've been knowing to, all this time; in which there is no great wonder, howsoever; mankind as often telling biting truths when they least mean it, as at any other time. You might have gone farther, notwithstanding, and said that we are mortal, the *worst* of us, which is quite as true, and a good deal more wholesome than saying that we are mortal, the *best* of us. As for the Quarter-Master's coming to speak a parting word to the sarjeant, it is quite out of the question, seeing that he has gone ahead, and that too with little parting notice to himself, or to any one else.”

“You are not quite as clear as common, in your language, Pathfinder. I know that we ought all to have solemn thoughts on these occasions, but I see no use in speaking in parables.”

“If my words are not plain, the idee is. In short, Master Cap, while Sarjeant Dunham has been preparing himself for a long journey, like a conscientious and honest man as he is,

deliberately and slowly, the Quarter-Master has started, in a hurry, before him; and, although it is a matter on which it does not become me to be very positive, I give it as my opinion that they travel such different roads, that they will never meet."

"Explain yourself, my friend," said the bewildered seaman, looking around him in search of Muir, whose absence began to excite his distrust. "I see nothing of the Quarter-Master, but I think him too much of a man to run away, now that the victory is gained. If the fight were ahead, instead of in our wake, the case would be altered."

"There lies all that is left of him, beneath that great-coat," returned the guide, who then briefly related the manner of the Lieutenant's death. "The Tuscarora was as venomous in his blow, as a rattler, though he failed to give the warning," continued Pathfinder. "I've seen many a desperate fight, and several of these sudden outbreaks of savage temper; but never, before, did I see a human soul quit the body more unexpectedly, or at a worse moment for the hopes of the dying man. His breath was stopped with the lie on his lips, and the spirit might be said to have passed away in the very ardour of wickedness."

Cap listened with a gaping mouth, and he gave two or three violent hems, as the other concluded, like one who distrusted his own respiration.

"This is an uncertain and uncomfortable life of yours, master Pathfinder, what between the fresh-water and the savages," he said, "and the sooner I get quit of it, the higher will be my opinion of myself. Now you mention it, I will say that the man ran for that berth in the rocks, when the enemy first bore down upon us, with a sort of instinct that I thought surprising in an officer; but I was in too great a hurry to follow, to log the whole matter accurately. God bless me—God bless me! a traitor do you say, and ready to sell his country, and to a bloody Frenchman too?"

"To sell any thing—country, soul, body, Mabel and all our scalps; and no ways particular, I'll engage, as to the purchaser. The countrymen of Captain Flinty-heart, here, were the paymasters this time."

"Just like 'em; ever ready to buy, when they can't thrash, and to run when they can do neither."

Mons. Sanglier lifted his cap with ironical gravity, and acknowledged the compliment with an expression of polite contempt that was altogether lost on its insensible subject. But Pathfinder had too much native courtesy, and was far too just-minded, to allow the attack to go unnoticed.

"Well—well," he interposed—"to my mind there is no great difference between an Englishman and a Frenchman, after all. They talk different tongues, and live under different kings, I will allow; but both are human, and feel like human beings, when there is occasion for it. If a Frenchman is sometimes skeary, so is an Englishman; and as for running away, why a man will now and then do it, as well as a horse, let him come of what people he may."

Captain Flinty-heart, as Pathfinder called him, made another obeisance; but this time the smile was friendly, and not ironical, for he felt that the intention was good, whatever might have been the mode of expressing it. Too philosophical, however, to heed what a man like Cap might say, or think, he finished his breakfast without allowing his attention to be again diverted from that important pursuit.

"My business here was principally with the Quarter-Master," Cap continued, as soon as he had done regarding the prisoner's pantomime. "The serjeant must be near his end; and I have thought he might wish to say something to his successor in authority, before he finally departed. It is too late, it would seem; and, as you say, Pathfinder, the lieutenant has truly gone before."

"That he has, though on a different path. As for authority, I suppose the corporal has now a right to command what's left of the 55th, though a small and worried, not to say frightened, party it is. But, if any thing needs to be done, the chances are greatly in favour of my being called on to do it. I suppose, however, we have only to bury our dead, set fire to the block and the huts, for they stand in the enemy's territory, by position, if not by law, and must not be left for their convenience. Our using them again, is out of the question; for now the Frenchers know where the island is to be found, it would be like thrusting the hand into a wolf-trap, with our eyes wide open. This part of the work, the Sarpent and I will see to; for we are as practysed in retreats as in advances."

"All that is very well, my good friend; and now for my poor brother-in-law: though he is a soldier, we cannot let him slip without a word of consolation, and a leave-taking, in my judgment. This has been an unlucky affair, on every tack; though I suppose it is what one had a right to expect, considering the state of the times, and the nature of the navigation. We must make the best of it, and try to help the worthy man to unmoor, without straining his messengers. Death is a circumstance, after all, Master Pathfinder, and one of a very general character, too, seeing that we must all submit to it, sooner or later."

"You say truth, you say truth; and for that reason I hold it to be wise to be always ready. I've often thought, Salt-water, that he is happiest who has the least to leave behind him when the summons comes. Now, here am I, a hunter and a scout, and a guide, although I do not own a foot of land on 'arth; yet do I enjoy and possess more than the great Albany Patroon. With the heavens over my head to keep me in mind of the last great hunt, and the dried leaves beneath my feet, I tramp over the ground as freely as if I was its lord and owner; and what more need heart desire? I do not say that I love nothing that belongs to 'arth; for I do, though not much, unless it might be Mabel Dunham, that I can't carry with me. I have some pups at the higher fort, that I valy considerable, though they are too noisy for warfare, and so we are compelled to live separate for a while; and then, I think, it would grieve me to part with Killdeer; but I see no reason why we should not be buried in the same grave, for we are, as near as can be, of the same length—six feet, to a hair's breadth; but, bating these, and a pipe that the Sarpent gave me, and a few tokens, received from travellers, all of which might be put in a pouch, and laid under my head, when the order comes to march, I shall be ready at a minute's warning; and, let me tell you, Master Cap, that's what I call a circumstance, too!"

"'Tis just so with me," answered the sailor, as the two walked towards the block, too much occupied with their respective morality, to remember, at the moment, the melancholy errand they were on—"that's just my way of feeling and reasoning. How often have I felt, when near shipwreck, the relief of not owning the craft! 'If she goes,' I have said

to myself, 'why my life goes with her, but not my property, and there's great comfort in that.' I've discovered, in the course of boxing about the world, from the Horn to Cape North, not to speak of this run on a bit of fresh-water, that if a man has a few dollars, and puts them in a chest, under lock and key, he is pretty certain to fasten up his heart in the same till; and so I carry pretty much all I own, in a belt round my body, in order, as I say, to keep the vitals in the right place. D——e, Pathfinder, if I think a man without a heart, any better than a fish with a hole in his air-bag."

"I don't know how that may be, Master Cap, but a man without a conscience is but a poor creatur', take my word for it, as any one will discover who has to do with a Mingo. I trouble myself but little with dollars or half-joes, for these are the favoryte coin in this part of the world; but I can easily believe, by what I've seen of mankind, that if a man *has* a chest filled with either, he may be said to lock up his heart in the same box. I once hunted for two summers, during the last peace, and I collected so much peltry that I found my right feelings giving way to a craving after property; and if I have consarn in marrying Mabel, it is that I may get to love such things too well, in order to make her comfortable."

"You're a philosopher, that's clear, Pathfinder; and I don't know but you're a Christian!"

"I should be out of humour with the man that gainsayed the last, Master Cap. I have not been christianized by the Moravians, like so many of the Delawares, it is true; but I hold to Christianity and white gifts. With me, it is as on-creditable for a white man not to be a Christian, as it is for a red-skin not to believe in his happy hunting-grounds; indeed, after allowing for difference in traditions, and in some variations about the manner in which the spirit will be occupied after death, I hold that a good Delaware is a good Christian, though he never saw a Moravian; and a good Christian a good Delaware, so far as natur' is consarned. The Sarpent and I talk these matters over often, for he has a han-kerin' after Christianity—"

"The d——l he has!" interrupted Cap. "And what does he intend to do in a church, with all the scalps he takes?"

"Don't run away with a false idee, friend Cap; don't run away with a false idee. These things are only skin-deep,

and all depend on edication and nat'ral gifts. Look around you, at mankind, and tell me why you see a red warrior here, a black one there, and white armies in another place? All this, and a great deal more of the same kind that I could point out, has been ordered for some 'special purpose; and it is not for us to fly in the face of facts, and deny their truth. No—no—each colour has its gifts, and its laws, and its traditions; and one is not to condemn another because he does not exactly comprehend it."

"You must have read a great deal, Pathfinder, to see things as clear as this," returned Cap, who was not a little mystified by his companion's simple creed—"It's all as plain as day to me now, though I must say I never fell in with these opinions before. What denomination do you belong to, my friend?"

"Anan?"

"What sect do you hold out for?—What particular church do you fetch up in?"

"Look about you and judge for yourself. I'm in church now; I eat in church, drink in church, sleep in church. The 'arth is the temple of the Lord, and I wait on him hourly, daily, without ceasing, I humbly hope. No—no—I'll not deny my blood and colour, but am Christian born, and shall die in the same faith. The Moravians tried me hard; and one of the king's chaplains has had his say, too, though that's a class no ways strenuous on such matters; and a missionary sent from Rome talked much with me, as I guided him through the forest, during the last peace; but I've had one answer for them all—I'm a Christian already, and want to be neither Moravian, nor Churchman, nor Papist. No—no—I'll not deny my birth and blood."

"I think a word from you might lighten the serjeant over the shoals of death, Master Pathfinder. He has no one with him but poor Mabel, and she, you know, besides being his daughter, is but a girl and a child after all."

"Mabel is feeble in body, friend Cap, but in matters of this natur', I doubt if she may not be stronger than most men. But Sarjeant Dunham is my friend, and he is your brother-in-law; so, now the press of fighting and maintaining our rights is over, it is fitting we should both go and witness his departure. I've stood by many a dying man, Mas-

ter Cap," continued Pathfinder, who had a besetting propensity to enlarge on his experience, stopping and holding his companion by a button—"I've stood by many a dying man's side, and seen his last gasp, and heard his last breath; for when the hurry and tumult of the battle is over, it is good to bethink us of the misfortunate, and it is remarkable to witness how differently human nature feels at such solemn moments. Some go their way as stupid and ignorant as if God had never given them reason, and an accountable state; while others quit us rejoicing, like men who leave heavy burthens behind them. I think that the mind sees clearly at such moments, my friend, and that past deeds stand thick before the recollection."

"I'll engage they do, Pathfinder. I have witnessed something of this myself, and hope I'm the better man for it. I remember once that I thought my own time had come, and the log was overhauled with a diligence I did not think myself capable of until that moment. I've not been a very great sinner, friend Pathfinder; that is to say, never on a large scale; though, I dare say, if the truth were spoken, a considerable amount of small matters might be raked up against me, as well as against another man; but then I've never committed piracy, nor high-treason, nor arson, nor any of them sort of things. As to smuggling, and the like of that, why I'm a seafaring man, and I suppose all callings have their weak spots. I dare say, your trade is not altogether without blemish, honourable and useful as it seems to be?"

"Many of the scouts and guides are desperate knaves; and, like the Quarter-Master here, some of them take pay of both sides. I hope I'm not one of them, though all occupations lead to temptations. Thrice have I been sorely tried in my life, and once I yielded a little, though I hope it was not in a matter to disturb a man's conscience in his last moments. The first time was when I found in the woods a pack of skins that I knowed belonged to a Frenchman, who was hunting on our side of the lines, where he had no business to be; twenty-six as handsome beavers as ever gladdened human eyes! Well, that was a sore temptation, for I thought the law would have been almost with me, although it was in peace-times. But then I remembered that such laws

wasn't made for us hunters, and bethought me that the poor man might have built great expectations for the next winter, on the sale of his skins; and I left them where they lay. Most of our people said I did wrong; but the manner in which I slept that night convinced me that I had done right. The next trial was when I found the rifle, that is sartainly the only one in this part of the world that can be calculated on as surely as Killdeer, and knowed that by taking it, or even hiding it, I might at once rise to be the first shot in all these parts. I was then young, and by no means as expert as I have since got to be, and youth is ambitious and striving; but, God be praised! I mastered that feeling; and, friend Cap, what is almost as good, I mastered my rival in as fair a shooting-match as was ever witnessed in a garri-son; he with his piece, and I with Killdeer, and before the general in person, too!" Here Pathfinder stopped to laugh, his triumph still glittering in his eyes, and glowing on his sunburnt and browned cheek.—"Well, the next conflict with the devil was the hardest of them all, and that was when I came suddenly upon a camp of six Mingos, asleep in the woods, with their guns and horns piled in a way that enabled me to get possession of them without waking a miscreant of them all. What an opportunity that would have been for the Sarpent, who would have despatched them, one after another, with his knife, and had their six scalps at his girdle, in about the time it takes me to tell you the story. Oh! he's a valiant warrior, that Chingachgook, and as honest as he's brave, and as good as he's honest!"

"And what may *you* have done in this matter, Master Pathfinder," demanded Cap, who began to be interested in the result—"it seems to me, you had made either a very lucky, or a very unlucky landfall."

"'Twas lucky, and 'twas unlucky, if you can understand that. 'Twas unlucky, for it proved a desperate trial; and yet 'twas lucky, all things considered, in the ind. I did not touch a hair of their heads, for a white man has no nat'ral gifts to take scalps; nor did I even make sure of one of their rifles. I distrusted myself, knowing that a Mingo is no favourite, in my own eyes."

"As for the scalps, I think you were right enough, my worthy friend; but as for the armament and the stores, they

would have been condemned by any prize-court in Christendom!"

"That they would—that they would; but then the Mingos would have gone clear, seeing that a white man can no more attack an unarmed, than a sleeping inimy. No—no—I did myself, and my colour, and my religion, too, greater justice. I waited till their nap was over, and they well on their war-path again; and by ambushing them here, and flanking them there, I peppered the blackguards intrinsically, like," Pathfinder occasionally caught a fine word from his associates, and used it a little vaguely—"that only one ever got back to his village; and he came into his wigwam, limping. Luckily, as it turned out, the great Delaware had only halted to jerk some venison, and was following on my trail; and when he got up, he had five of the scoundrel's scalps hanging where they ought to be; so, you see, nothing was lost by doing right, either in the way of honour or in that of profit."

Cap grunted an assent, though the distinctions in his companion's morality, it must be owned, were not exactly clear to his understanding. The two had occasionally moved towards the block, as they conversed, and then stopped again, as some matter of more interest than common, brought them to a halt. They were now so near the building, however, that neither thought of pursuing the subject any further; but each prepared himself for the final scene with Serjeant Dunham.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Thou barraine ground, whom winter's wrath hath wasted,
Art made a mirrcc to behold my plight:
Whil'ome thy fresh spring flower'd; and after hasted
Thy summer proude, with daffodillies dight;
And now is come thy winter's stormy state,
Thy mantle mar'd wherein thou maskedst late."

SPENSER.

ALTHOUGH the soldier may regard danger, and even death, with indifference, in the tumult of battle, when the passage

of the soul is delayed to moments of tranquillity and reflection, the change commonly brings with it the usual train of solemn reflections; of regrets for the past; and of doubts and anticipations for the future. Many a man has died with an heroic expression on his lips, but with heaviness and distrust at his heart; for, whatever may be the varieties of our religious creeds,—let us depend on the mediation of Christ, the dogmas of Mahomet, or the elaborated allegories of the East, there is a conviction, common to all men, that death is but the stepping-stone between this and a more elevated state of being. Serjeant Dunham was a brave man; but he was departing for a country in which resolution could avail him nothing; and as he felt himself gradually loosened from the grasp of the world, his thoughts and feelings took the natural direction; for, if it be true that death is the great leveller, in nothing is it more true, than that it reduces all to the same views of the vanity of life.

Pathfinder, though a man of quaint and peculiar habits and opinions, was always thoughtful, and disposed to view the things around him, with a shade of philosophy, as well as with seriousness. In him, therefore, the scene in the block-house awakened no very novel feelings; but the case was different with Cap. Rude, opinionated, dogmatical, and boisterous, the old sailor was little accustomed to view even death, with any approach to the gravity that its importance demands; and, notwithstanding all that had passed, and his real regard for his brother-in-law, he now entered the room of the dying man, with much of that callous unconcern which was the fruit of long training in a school, that, while it gives so many lessons in the sublimest truths, generally wastes its admonitions on scholars who are little disposed to profit by them.

The first proof that Cap gave of his not entering as fully as those around him, into the solemnity of the moment, was by commencing a narration of the events which had just led to the deaths of Muir and Arrowhead. "Both tripped their anchors in a hurry, brother Dunham," he concluded; "and you have the consolation of knowing that others have gone before you, in the great journey, and they, too, men whom you've no particular reason to love; which to me, were I placed in your situation, would be a source of very great

satisfaction. My mother always said, Master Pathfinder, that dying people's spirits should not be damped, but that they ought to be encouraged by all proper and prudent means; and this news will give the poor fellow a great lift, if he feels towards them savages any way as I feel myself."

June arose, at this intelligence, and stole from the block-house with a noiseless step. Dunham listened with a vacant stare, for life had already lost so many of its ties that he had really forgotten Arrowhead, and cared nothing for Muir; but he inquired, in a feeble voice, for Eau-douce. The young man was immediately summoned, and soon made his appearance. The serjeant gazed at him kindly, and the expression of his eyes was that of regret for the injury he had done him, in thought. The party in the block-house now consisted of Pathfinder, Cap, Mabel, Jasper, and the dying man. With the exception of the daughter, all stood around the serjeant's pallet, in attendance on his last moments. Mabel kneeled at his side, now pressing a clammy hand to her head, now applying moisture to the parched lips of her father.

"Your case will shortly be oorn, sarjeant," said Pathfinder, who could hardly be said to be awe-struck by the scene, for he had witnessed the approach and victories of death too often for that; but who felt the full difference between his triumphs in the excitement of battle, and in the quiet of the domestic circle; "and I make no question we shall meet ag'in, hereafter. Arrowhead has gone his way, 'tis true; but it can never be the way of a just Indian. You've seen the last of him; for his path cannot be the path of the just. Reason is ag'in the thought, in his case, as it is also, in my judgment, ag'in it, too, in the case of Lieutenant Muir. You have done your duty in life, and when a man does that, he may start on the longest journey, with a light heart, and an actyve foot."

"I hope so, my friend—I've tried to do my duty."

"Ay—ay—" put in Cap; "intention is half the battle; and though you would have done better had you hove-to in the offing, and sent a craft in to feel how the land lay; things might have turned out differently; no one, here, doubts that you meant all for the best, and no one anywhere else, I

should think, from what I've seen of this world, and read of t' other."

"I did—yes—I meant all for the best."

"Father!—Oh! my beloved father!"

"Magnet is taken aback by this blow, Master Pathfinder, and can say, or do, but little to carry her father over the shoals; so we must try all the harder to serve him a friendly turn, ourselves."

"Did you speak, Mabel?" Dunham asked, turning his eyes in the direction of his daughter, for he was already too feeble to turn his body.

"Yes, father; rely on nothing you have done yourself, for mercy and salvation; trust altogether in the blessed mediation of the Son of God!"

"The chaplain has told us something like this, brother—the dear child may be right."

"Ay—ay—that's doctrine, out of question. He will be our judge, and keeps the log-book of our acts, and will foot them all up, at the last day, and then say who has done well, and who has done ill. I do believe Mabel is right, but then you need not be concerned, as no doubt the account has been fairly kept."

"Uncle!—dearest father!—This is a vain illusion—Oh! place all your trust in the mediation of our holy redeemer! Have you not often felt your own insufficiency to effect your own wishes in the commonest things, and how can you imagine yourself, by your own acts, equal to raise up a frail and sinful nature sufficiently to be received into the presence of perfect purity? There is no hope for any, but in the mediation of Christ!"

"This is what the Moravians used to tell us," said Pathfinder to Cap, in a low voice; "rely on it, Mabel is right."

"Right enough, friend Pathfinder, in the distances, but wrong in the course. I'm afraid the child will get the serjeant adrift, at the very moment when we had him in the best of the water, and in the plainest part of the channel."

"Leave it to Mabel—leave it to Mabel—she knows better than any of us, and can do no harm."

"I have heard this before"—Dunham at length replied—"Ah! Mabel; it is strange for the parent to lean on the child, at a moment like this!"

“Put your trust in God; father—lean on his holy and compassionate son. Pray, dearest, dearest father—pray for his omnipotent support.”

“I am not used to prayer—brother—Pathfinder—Jasper—can you help me to words?”

Cap scarce knew what prayer meant, and he had no answer to give. Pathfinder prayed often, daily if not hourly—but it was mentally, in his own simple modes of thinking, and without the aid of words at all. In this strait, therefore, he was as useless as the mariner, and had no reply to make. As for Jasper Eau-douce, though he would gladly have endeavoured to move a mountain, to relieve Mabel, this was asking assistance, it exceeded his power to give, and he shrunk back with the shame, that is only too apt to overcome the young and vigorous, when called on to perform an act that tacitly confesses their real weakness and dependence on a superior power.

“Father”—said Mabel, wiping her eyes, and endeavouring to compose features that were pallid, and actually quivering with emotion—“*I* will pray with you—*for* you—*for myself*, for us *all*. The petition of the feeblest and humblest is never unheeded.”

There was something sublime, as well as much that was supremely touching in this act of filial piety. The quiet, but earnest manner in which this young creature prepared herself to perform the duty; the self-abandonment with which she forgot her sex’s timidity and sex’s shame, in order to sustain her parent at that trying moment; the loftiness of purpose with which she directed all her powers to the immense object before her, with a woman’s devotion, and a woman’s superiority to trifles, when her affections make the appeal; and the holy calm into which her grief was compressed, rendered her, for the moment, an object of something very like awe and veneration to her companions.

Mabel had been religiously and reasonably educated; equally without exaggeration and without self-sufficiency. Her reliance on God was cheerful and full of hope, while it was of the humblest and most dependent nature. She had been accustomed from childhood, to address herself to the Deity, in prayer;—taking example from the divine mandate of Christ himself, who commanded his followers to abstain

from vain repetitions, and who has left behind him a petition that is unequalled for sublimity and sententiousness, as if expressly to rebuke the disposition of man to set up his own loose and random thoughts as the most acceptable sacrifice. The sect in which she had been reared, has furnished to its followers some of the most beautiful compositions of the language, as a suitable vehicle for its devotion and solicitations. Accustomed to this mode of public and even private prayer, the mind of our heroine had naturally fallen into its train of lofty thought; her task had become improved by its study, and her language elevated and enriched by its phrases. In short, Mabel, in this respect, was an instance of the influence of familiarity with propriety of thought, fitness of language, and decorum of manner, on the habits and expressions of even those who might be supposed not to be always so susceptible of receiving high impressions of this nature. When she kneeled at the bed-side of her father, the very reverence of her attitude and manner, prepared the spectators for what was to come; and as her affectionate heart prompted her tongue, and memory came in aid of both, the petition and praises that she offered up, were of a character that might have worthily led the spirits of angels. Although the words were not slavishly borrowed, the expressions partook of the simple dignity of the liturgy to which she had been accustomed, and was probably as worthy of the being to whom they were addressed as they could well be made by human powers. They produced their full impression on the hearers; for it is worthy of remark, that, notwithstanding the pernicious effects of a false taste when long submitted to, real sublimity and beauty are so closely allied to nature, that they generally find an echo in every heart.

But when our heroine came to touch upon the situation of the dying man, she became the most truly persuasive, for then she was the most truly zealous and natural. The beauty of the language was preserved, but it was sustained by the simple power of love; and her words were warmed by a holy zeal, that approached to the grandeur of true eloquence. We might record some of her expressions, but doubt the propriety of subjecting such sacred themes to a too familiar analysis, and refrain.

The effect of this singular but solemn scene, was different

on the different individuals present. Dunham himself was soon lost in the subject of the prayer ; and he felt some such relief, as one who finds himself staggering on the edge of a precipice under a burthen difficult to be borne, might be supposed to experience, when he unexpectedly feels the weight removed, in order to be placed on the shoulders of another better able to sustain it. Cap was surprised, as well as awed ; though the effects on his mind were not very deep or very lasting. He wondered a little at his own sensations, and had his doubts whether they were as manly and heroic as they ought to be ; but he was far too sensible of the influence of truth, humility, religious submission and human dependency, to think of interposing with any of his crude objections. Jasper knelt opposite to Mabel, covered his face, and followed her words, with an earnest wish to aid her prayers with his own ; though it may be questioned if his thoughts did not dwell quite as much on the soft, gentle accents of the petitioner, as on the subject of her petition.

The effect on Pathfinder was striking and visible ; visible, because he stood erect, also opposite to Mabel ; and the workings of his countenance, as usual, betrayed the workings of the spirit within. He leaned on his rifle, and, at moments, the sinewy fingers grasped the barrel with a force that seemed to compress the weapon ; while, once or twice, as Mabel's language rose in intimate association with her thoughts, he lifted his eyes to the floor above him, as if he expected to find some visible evidence of the presence of the dread being to whom the words were addressed. Then again his feelings reverted to the fair creature who was thus pouring out her spirit, in fervent but calm petitions, in behalf of a dying parent ; for Mabel's cheek was no longer pallid, but was flushed with a holy enthusiasm, while her blue eyes were upturned in the light, in a way to resemble a picture by Guido. At these moments all the honest and manly attachment of Pathfinder glowed in his ingenuous features, and his gaze at our heroine was such as the fondest parent might fasten on the child of his love.

Serjeant Dunham laid his hand feebly on the head of Mabel, as she ceased praying, and buried her face in his blanket.

“ Bless you—my beloved child—bless you—” he rather

whispered than uttered aloud—"this is truly consolation—would that I too could pray!"

"Father, you know the Lord's prayer—you taught it to me yourself, while I was yet an infant."

The serjeant's face gleamed with a smile; for he *did* remember to have discharged that portion, at least, of the paternal duty; and the consciousness of it gave him inconceivable gratification at that solemn moment. He was then silent for several minutes, and all present believed that he was communing with God.

"Mabel—my child—" he at length uttered, in a voice that seemed to be reviving—"Mabel—I'm quitting you."—The spirit, at its great and final passage, appears ever to consider the body as nothing—"I'm quitting you, my child—where is your hand?"

"Here, dearest father—here are both—oh! take both."

"Pathfinder—" added the serjeant, feeling on the opposite side of the bed, where Jasper still knelt, and getting one of the hands of the young man, by mistake—"take it—I leave you as her father—as you and she may please—bless you—bless you both—"

At that awful instant, no one would rudely apprise the serjeant of his mistake; and he died a minute or two later, holding Jasper's and Mabel's hands covered by both his own. Our heroine was ignorant of the fact, until an exclamation of Cap's announced the death of her father; when, raising her face, she saw the eyes of Jasper riveted on her own, and felt the warm pressure of his hand. But a single feeling was predominant at that instant; and Mabel withdrew to weep, scarcely conscious of what had occurred. The Pathfinder took the arm of Eau-douce, and he left the block.

The two friends walked in silence past the fire, along the glade, and nearly reached the opposite shore of the island, in profound silence. Here they stopped, and Pathfinder spoke.

"'Tis all over, Jasper," he said; "'tis all over. Ah's me! Poor Sarjeant Dunham has finished his march, and that too, by the hand of a venomous Mingo. Well, we never know what is to happen, and his luck may be your'n or mine, to-morrow or next day!"

"And Mabel?—What is to become of Mabel, Pathfinder?"

"You heard the sarjeant's dying words—he has left his child in my care, Jasper; and it is a most solemn trust, it is; yes, it is a most solemn trust!"

"It's a trust, Pathfinder, of which any man would be glad to relieve you," returned the youth, with a bitter smile.

"I've often thought it has fallen into wrong hands. I'm not consaited, Jasper; I'm not consaited, I do think I'm not; but if Mabel Dunham is willing to overlook all my imperfections and ignorances like, I should be wrong to gainsay it, on account of any sartainty I may have myself about my own want of merit."

"No one will blame you, Pathfinder, for marrying Mabel Dunham, any more than they will blame you for wearing a precious jewel in your bosom, that a friend had freely given you."

"Do you think they'll blame Mabel, lad?—I've had my misgivings about that, too; for all persons may not be as disposed to look at me with the same eyes as you and the sarjeant's daughter." Jasper Eau-douce started, as a man flinches at sudden bodily pain; but he otherwise maintained his self-command.—"And mankind is envious and ill-natured, more particularly in and about the garrisons. I sometimes wish, Jasper, that Mabel could have taken a fancy to you, I do; and that you had taken a fancy to her; for it often seems to me, that one like you, after all, might make her happier than I ever can."

"We will not talk about this, Pathfinder," interrupted Jasper, hoarsely and impatiently—"you will be Mabel's husband, and it is not right to speak of any one else in that character. As for me, I shall take Master Cap's advice, and try and make a man of myself, by seeing what is to be done on the salt-water."

"You, Jasper Western!—you quit the lakes, the forests, and the lines; and this, too, for the towns and wasty ways of the settlements, and a little difference in the taste of the water. Haven't we the salt-licks, if salt is necessary to you? and oughtn't man to be satisfied with what contents the other creatur's of God? I counted on you, Jasper—I counted on you, I did—and thought, now that Mabel and I intend to dwell in a cabin of our own, that some day you might be tempted to choose a companion, too, and come and settle in

our neighbourhood. There is a beautiful spot, about fifty miles west of the garrison, that I had chosen in my mind, for my own place of abode; and there is an excellent harbour about ten leagues this side of it, where you could run in and out, with the cutter, at any leisure minute; and I'd even fancied you, and your wife, in possession of the one place, and Mabel and I in possession of t'other. We should be just a healthy hunt apart; and if the Lord ever intends any of his creatures to be happy on 'arth, none could be happier than we four."

"You forget, my friend," answered Jasper, taking the guide's hand, and forcing a friendly smile, "that I have no fourth person to love and cherish; and I much doubt if I ever shall love any other, as I love you and Mabel."

"Thank 'ee, boy; I thank you with all my heart—but what you call love for Mabel, is only friendship, like, and a very different thing from what I feel. Now, instead of sleeping as sound as natur' at midnight, as I used to could, I dream nightly of Mabel Dunham. The young does sport before me; and when I raise Killdeer, in order to take a little venison, the animals look back, and it seems as if they all had Mabel's sweet countenance, laughing in my face, and looking as if they said, 'shoot me if you dare!' Then I hear her soft voice calling out among the birds as they sing; and no later than the last nap I took, I bethought me, in fancy, of going over the Niagara, holding Mabel in my arms, rather than part from her. The bitterest moments I've ever known, were them in which the devil, or some Mingo conjurer, perhaps, has just put into my head to fancy in dreams that Mabel is lost to me, by some unaccountable calamity—either by changefulness, or by violence."

"Oh! Pathfinder, if you think this so bitter in a dream, what must it be to one who feels its reality, and knows it all to be true—true—true. So true, as to leave no hope; to leave nothing but despair!"

These words burst from Jasper, as a fluid pours from the vessel that has been suddenly broken. They were uttered involuntarily, almost unconsciously, but with a truth and feeling, that carried with them the instant conviction of their deep sincerity. Pathfinder started, gazed at his friend for quite a minute, like one bewildered; and then it was, that, in

despite of all his simplicity, the truth gleamed upon him. All know how corroborating proofs crowd upon the mind, as soon as it catches a direct clue to any hitherto unsuspected fact; how rapidly the thoughts flow, and premises tend to their just conclusions, under such circumstances. Our hero was so confiding by nature, so just, and so much disposed to imagine that all his friends wished him the same happiness as he wished them, that, until this unfortunate moment, a suspicion of Jasper's attachment for Mabel had never been awakened in his bosom. He was, however, now too experienced in the emotions that characterize the passion; and the burst of feeling in his companion was too violent, and too natural, to leave any further doubt on the subject. The feeling that first followed this change of opinion, was one of deep humility and exquisite pain. He bethought him of Jasper's youth, his higher claims to personal appearance, and all the general probabilities that such a suitor would be more agreeable to Mabel, than he could possibly be, himself. Then the noble rectitude of mind, for which the man was so distinguished, asserted its power; it was sustained by his rebuked manner of thinking of himself, and all that habitual deference for the rights and feelings of others, which appeared to be inbred in his very nature. Taking the arm of Jasper, he led him to a log, where he compelled the young man to seat himself, by a sort of irresistible exercise of his iron muscles, and where he placed himself at his side.

The instant his feelings had found vent, Eau-douce was both alarmed at, and ashamed of, their violence. He would have given all he possessed on earth, could the last three minutes be recalled, but he was too frank by disposition, and too much accustomed to deal ingenuously by his friend, to think a moment, of attempting further concealment, or of any evasion of the explanation that he knew was about to be demanded. Even while he trembled in anticipation of what was about to follow, he never contemplated equivocation.

"Jasper," Pathfinder commenced, in a tone so solemn as to thrill on every nerve in his listener's body, "this *has* surprised me! You have kinder feelings towards Mabel, than I had thought; and, unless my own mistaken vanity and consait have cruelly deceived me, I pity you, boy, from my soul, I do! Yes, I think, I know how to pity any one,

who has set his heart on a creature like Mabel, unless he sees a prospect of her regarding him, as he regards her. This matter must be cleared up, Eau-douce, as the Delawares say, until there shall not be a cloud atween us."

"What clearing up can it want, Pathfinder? I love Mabel Dunham, and Mabel Dunham does not love me—she prefers you for a husband; and the wisest thing I can do, is to go off at once, to the salt-water, and try to forget you both."

"Forget me, Jasper!—that would be a punishment I don't deserve. But, how do you know that Mabel prefers *me*?—how do you know it, lad? to me it seems impossible, like!"

"Is she not to marry you, and would Mabel marry a man she does not love?"

"She has been hard urged by the sarjeant, she has; and a dutiful child may have found it difficult to withstand the wishes of a dying parent. Have you ever told Mabel, that you preferred her, Jasper; that you bore her these feelings?"

"Never—Pathfinder—I would not do you that wrong!"

"I believe you, lad, I do believe you; and I think you would now go off to the salt-water, and let the scent die with you. But this must not be. Mabel shall hear all, and she shall have her own way, if my heart breaks in the trial, she shall. No words have ever passed atween you, then Jasper?"

"Nothing of account—nothing direct. Still, I will own all my foolishness, Pathfinder, for I ought to own it to a generous friend like you, and there will be an end of it. You know how young people understand each other, or think they understand each other, without always speaking out in plain speech; and get to know each other's thoughts, or to think they know them, by means of a hundred little ways?"

"Not I, Jasper, not I," truly answered the guide; for, sooth to say, his advances had never been met with any of that sweet and precious encouragement that silently marks the course of sympathy united to passion. "Not I, Jasper—I know nothing of all this. Mabel has always treated me fairly, and said what she has had to say, in speech as plain as tongue could tell it."

"You have had the pleasure of hearing her say that she loved you, Pathfinder?"

"Why no, Jasper, not just that, in words. She has told me that we never could—never ought to be married; that *she* was not good enough for *me*; though she *did* say that she honoured me, and respected me. But then the sarjeant said it was always so with the youthful and timid,—that her mother did so, and said so, afore her; and that I ought to be satisfied if she would consent, on any terms, to marry me: and, therefore, I have concluded that all was right, I have."

In spite of all his friendship for the successful wooer—in spite of all his honest, sincere wishes for his happiness, we should be unfaithful chroniclers, did we not own that Jasper felt his heart bound with an uncontrollable feeling of delight, at this admission. It was not that he saw or felt any hope connected with the circumstance; but it was grateful to the jealous covetousness of unlimited love, thus to learn that no other ears had heard the sweet confessions that were denied its own.

"Tell me more of this manner of talking without the use of the tongue," continued Pathfinder, whose countenance was getting to be grave, and who now questioned his companion, like one that seemed to anticipate evil in the reply. "I can and have conversed with Chingachgook, and with his son Uncas, too, in that mode, afore the latter fell; but I didn't know that young girls practysed this art; and, least of all, Mabel Dunham!"

"'Tis nothing, Pathfinder. I mean only a look, or a smile, or a glance of the eye, or the trembling of an arm, or a hand, when the young woman has had occasion to touch me; and because I have been weak enough to tremble even at Mabel's breath, or her brushing me with her clothes, my vain thoughts have misled me. I never spoke plainly to Mabel, myself; and now there is no use for it, since there is clearly no hope."

"Jasper," returned Pathfinder, simply, but with a dignity that precluded farther remarks at the moment, "we will talk of the sarjeant's funeral, and of our own departure from this island. After these things are disposed of, it will be time enough to say more of the sarjeant's daughter. This matter must be looked into; for the father left me the care of his child."

Jasper was glad enough to change the subject; and the friends separated, each charged with the duty most peculiar to his own station and habits.

That afternoon all the dead were interred—the grave of Serjeant Dunham being dug in the centre of the glade, beneath the shade of a huge elm. Mabel wept bitterly at the ceremony, and she found relief in thus disburthening her sorrow. The night passed tranquilly, as did the whole of the following day; Jasper declaring that the gale was too severe to venture on the lake. This circumstance detained Captain Sanglier, also; who did not quit the island until the morning of the third day after the death of Dunham; when the weather had moderated, and the wind had become fair. Then, indeed, he departed, after taking leave of the Pathfinder, in the manner of one who believed he was in company of a distinguished character, for the last time. The two separated like those who respect one another, while each felt that the other was an enigma to himself.

CHAPTER XIV.

“Playful she turned, that he might see
The passing smile her cheek put on;
But when she marked how mournfully
His eyes met hers, that smile was gone.”

LALLA ROOKH.

THE occurrences of the last few days had been too exciting, and had made too many demands on the fortitude of our heroine, to leave her in the helplessness of grief. She mourned for her father, and she occasionally shuddered, as she recalled the sudden death of Jennie, and all the horrible scenes she had witnessed; but, on the whole, she had aroused herself, and was no longer in the deep depression that usually accompanies grief. Perhaps the overwhelming, almost stupefying sorrow that crushed poor June, and left her for nearly twenty-four hours in a state of stupor, assisted Mabel in conquering her own feelings, for she had felt called on to

administer consolation to the young Indian woman. This she had done, in the quiet, soothing, insinuating way, in which her sex usually exerts its influence, on such occasions.

The morning of the third day was set for that on which the Scud was to sail. Jasper had made all his preparations; the different effects were embarked, and Mabel had taken leave of June—a painful and affectionate parting. In a word, all was ready, and every soul had left the island but the Indian woman, Pathfinder, Jasper, and our heroine. The former had gone into a thicket to weep, and the three last were approaching the spot where three canoes lay; one of which was the property of June, and the other two were in waiting to carry the others off to the Scud. Pathfinder led the way, but, when he drew near the shore, instead of taking the direction to the boats, he motioned to his companions to follow, and proceeded to a fallen tree, that lay on the margin of the glade, and out of view of those in the cutter. Seating himself on the trunk, he signed to Mabel to take her place on one side of him, and to Jasper to occupy the other.

“Sit down here, Mabel; sit down there, Eau-douce,” he commenced, as soon as he had taken his own seat; “I’ve something that lies heavy on my mind, and now is the time to take it off, if it’s ever to be done. Sit down, Mabel, and let me lighten my heart, if not my conscience, while I’ve the strength to do it.”

The pause that succeeded, lasted two or three minutes, and both the young people wondered what was to come next,—the idea that Pathfinder could have any weight on his conscience, seeming equally improbable to each.

“Mabel,” our hero at length resumed, “we must talk plainly to each other, afore we join your uncle in the cutter, where the Salt-water has slept every night since the last rally; for he says it’s the only place in which a man can be sure of keeping the hair on his head, he does—Ah’s me! what have I to do with these follies and sayings, now? I try to be pleasant, and to feel light-hearted, but the power of man can’t make water run up stream. Mabel, you know that the sarjeant, afore he left us, had settled it atween us two, that we were to become man and wife, and that we were to live together, and to love one another as long as the Lord was pleased to keep us both on ’arth; yes, and afterwards, too?”

Mabel's cheeks had regained a little of their ancient bloom, in the fresh air of the morning; but at this unlooked-for address they blanched again, nearly to the pallid hue which grief had imprinted there. Still she looked kindly, though seriously, at Pathfinder, and even endeavoured to force a smile.

"Very true, my excellent friend,"—she answered—"this was my poor father's wish, and I feel certain that a whole life devoted to your welfare and comforts, could scarcely repay you for all you have done for us."

"I fear me, Mabel, that man and wife needs be bound together by a stronger tie than such feelings, I do. You have done nothing for me, or nothing of any account, and yet my very heart yearns towards you, it does; and therefore it seems likely that these feelings come from something besides saving scalps and guiding through woods."

Mabel's cheek had begun to glow again; and, though she struggled hard to smile, her voice trembled a little, as she answered.

"Had we not better postpone this conversation, Pathfinder?" she said; "we are not alone; and nothing is so unpleasant to a listener, they say, as family matters in which he feels no interest."

"It's because we are not alone, Mabel, or rather because Jasper is with us, that I wish to talk of this matter. The sarjeant believed I might make a suitable companion for you; and, though I had misgivings about it—yes, I had many misgivings—he finally persuaded me into the idee, and things came round atween us, as you know. But, when you promised your father to marry me, Mabel, and gave me your hand, so modestly, but so prettily, there was one circumstance, as your uncle called it, that you didn't know; and I've thought it right to tell you what it is, before matters are finally settled. I've often taken a poor deer for my dinner, when good venison was not to be found; but it's as nat'ral not to take up with the worst, when the best may be had."

"You speak in a way, Pathfinder, that is difficult to be understood. If this conversation is really necessary, I trust you will be more plain."

"Well, then, Mabel, I've been thinking it was quite likely when you gave in to the sarjeant's wishes, that you

did not know the natur' of Jasper Western's feelings towards you?"

"Pathfinder!"—and Mabel's cheek now paled to the livid hue of death; then it flushed to the tint of crimson; and her whole frame shuddered. Pathfinder, however, was too intent on his own object, to notice this agitation; and Eau-douce had hidden his face in his hands, in time to shut out its view.

"I've been talking with the lad; and, on comparing his dreams with my dreams, his feelings with my feelings, and his wishes with my wishes, I fear we think too much alike, concerning you, for both of us to be very happy."

"Pathfinder—you forget—you should remember that we are betrothed!" said Mabel, hastily, and in a voice so low, that it required acute attention in the listeners to catch the syllables. Indeed, the last word was not quite intelligible to the guide, and he confessed his ignorance by the usual——

"Anan?"

"You forget that we are to be married; and such allusions are improper, as well as painful."

"Every thing is proper that is right, Mabel; and every thing is right that leads to justice and fair dealing: though it *is painful* enough, as you say; as I find on trial, I do. Now, Mabel, had you known that Eau-douce thinks of you in this way, maybe you never would have consented to be married to one as old and as uncomely as I am."

"Why this cruel trial, Pathfinder? To what can all this lead? Jasper Western thinks no such thing: he says nothing—he feels nothing."

"Mabel!" burst from out of the young man's lips, in a way to betray the uncontrollable nature of his emotions, though he uttered not another syllable.

Mabel buried her face in both her hands; and the two sat like a pair of guilty beings, suddenly detected in the commission of some crime that involved the happiness of a common patron. At that instant, perhaps, Jasper himself was inclined to deny his passion, through an extreme unwillingness to grieve his friend; while Mabel, on whom this positive announcement of a fact that she had rather unconsciously hoped than believed, came so unexpectedly, felt her mind momentarily bewildered; and she scarce knew whether to

weep or to rejoice. Still she was the first to speak ; since Eau-douce could utter naught that would be disingenuous, or that would pain his friend.

"Pathfinder," she said, "you talk wildly. Why mention this at all?"

"Well, Mabel, if I talk wildly, I *am* half wild, you know ; by natur', I fear, as well as by habit." As he said this, he endeavoured to laugh in his usual noiseless way, but the effect produced a strange and discordant sound ; and it appeared nearly to choke him. "Yes, I *must* be wild ; I'll not attempt to deny it."

"Dearest Pathfinder !—my best, almost my only friend ! you *cannot*, *do not* think I intended to say that !" interrupted Mabel, almost breathless in her haste to relieve his mortification—"If courage, truth, nobleness of soul and conduct, unyielding principles and a hundred other excellent qualities can render any man respectable, esteemed, or beloved, your claims are inferior to those of no other human being."

"What tender and bewitching voices they have, Jasper !" resumed the guide, now laughing freely and naturally—"Yes, natur' seems to have made them on purpose to sing in our ears, when the music of the woods is silent ! But we must come to a right understanding, we must. I ask you again, Mabel, if you had known that Jasper Western loves you as well as I do, or better perhaps—though that is scarce possible,—that in his dreams he sees your face in the water of the lake ; that he talks to you, and of you, in his sleep ; fancies all that is beautiful like Mabel Dunham, and all that is good and virtuous ; believes he never knowed happiness until he knowed you ; could kiss the ground on which you have trod, and forgets all the joys of his calling, to think of you and of the delight of gazing at your beauty, and in listening to your voice, would you then have consented to marry me?"

Mabel could not have answered this question, if she would, but, though her face was buried in her hands, the tint of the rushing blood was visible between the openings, and the suffusion seemed to impart itself to her very fingers. Still nature asserted her power, for there was a single instant when the astonished, almost terrified girl stole a glance at Jasper, as if distrusting Pathfinder's history of his feelings, read the truth of all he said in that furtive look, and instantly

concealed her face again, as if she would hide it from observation for ever.

"Take time to think, Mabel," the guide continued, "for it is a solemn thing to accept one man for a husband, while the thoughts and wishes lead to another. Jasper and I have talked this matter over, freely and like old friends, and though I always knew that we viewed most things pretty much alike, I couldn't have thought that we regarded any particular object with the very same eyes, as it might be, until we opened our minds to each other about you. Now, Jasper owns that the very first time he beheld you, he thought you the sweetest and winningest creatur' he had ever met; that your voice sounded like murmuring water in his ears; that he fancied his sails were your garments, fluttering in the wind; that your laugh haunted him in his sleep; and that, ag'in and ag'in, has he started up affrighted, because he has fancied some one wanted to force you out of the Scud, where he imagined you had taken up your abode. Nay, the lad has even acknowledged that he often weeps, at the thought that you are likely to spend your days with another, and not with him."

"Jasper!"

"It's solemn truth, Mabel, and it's right you should know it. Now stand up, and choose atween us. I do believe Eau-douce loves you as well as I do myself; he has tried to persuade me that he loves you better, but that I will not allow, for I do not think it possible; but I will own the boy loves you, heart and soul, and he has a good right to be heard. The sarjeant left me your protector, and not your tyrant. I told him that I would be a father to you, as well as a husband, and it seems to me no feeling father would deny his child this small privilege. Stand up, Mabel, therefore, and speak your thoughts as freely as if I were the sarjeant himself, seeking your good, and nothing else."

Mabel dropped her hands, arose, and stood face to face with her two suitors, though the flush that was on her cheeks was feverish, the evidence of excitement, rather than of shame.

"What would you have, Pathfinder?" she asked: "Have I not already promised my poor father to do all you desire?"

"Then I desire this. Here I stand, a man of the forest,

and of little larning, though I fear with an ambition beyond my desarts, and I'll do my endivours to do justice to both sides. In the first place, it is allowed that so far as feelings in your behalf are consarned, we love you just the same; Jasper thinks his feelings *must* be the strongest, but this I cannot say, in honesty, for it doesn't seem to me that it *can* be true; else I would frankly and freely confess it, I would. So in this particular, Mabel, we are here before you, on equal tarms. As for myself, being the oldest, I'll first say what little can be produced in my favour, as well as ag'in it. As a hunter, I do think there is no man near the lines that can outdo me. If venison, or bear's meat, or even birds and fish, should ever be scarce in our cabin, it would be more likely to be owing to natur' and Providence, than to any fault of mine. In short, it does seem to me, that the woman who depended on me, would never be likely to want for food. But, I'm fearful ignorant! It's true, I speak several tongues, such as they be, while I'm very far from being expart at my own. Then, my years are greater than your own, Mabel; and the circumstance that I was so long the sarjeant's comrade, can be no great merit in your eyes. I wish, too, I was more comely, I do; but we are all as natur' made us, and the last thing that a man ought to lament, except on very special occasions, is his looks. When all is remembered, age, looks, larning and habits, Mabel, conscience tells me I ought to confess that I'm altogether unfit for you, if not downright unworthy; and I would give up the hope, this minute, I would, if I didn't feel something pulling at my heart strings which seems hard to undo."

"Pathfinder!—noble, generous Pathfinder!"—cried our heroine, seizing his hand, and kissing it with a species of holy reverence; "you do yourself injustice—you forget my poor father and your promise—you do not know *me*!"

"Now, here's Jasper," continued the guide, without allowing the girl's caresses to win him from his purpose; "with *him*, the case is different. In the way of providing, as in that of loving, there's not much to choose atween us, for the lad is frugal, industrious and careful. Then he is quite a scholar—knows the tongue of the Frenchers—reads many books, and some, I know, that you like to read yourself—

can understand you at all times, which, perhaps, is more than I can say for myself."

"What of all this"—interrupted Mabel, impatiently—"why speak of it now—why speak of it, at all?"

"Then the lad has a manner of letting his thoughts be known, that I fear I can never equal. If there's any thing on 'arth that would make my tongue bold and persuading, Mabel, I do think it's yourself; and yet, in our late conversations, Jasper has outdone me, even on this point, in a way to make me ashamed of myself. He has told me how simple you were, and how true-hearted, and kind-hearted; and how you looked down upon vanities, for though you might be the wife of more than one officer, as he thinks, that you cling to feeling, and would rather be true to yourself, and natur', than a colonel's lady. He fairly made my blood warm, he did, when he spoke of your having beauty without seeming ever to have looked upon it, and the manner in which you moved about like a young fa'an, so nat'ral and graceful like, without knowing it; and the truth and justice of your idees, and the warmth and generosity of your heart—"

"Jasper!" interrupted Mabel, giving way to feelings that had gathered an ungovernable force by being so long pent, and falling into the young man's willing arms, weeping like a child, and almost as helpless. "Jasper!—Jasper!—why have you kept this from me?"

The answer of Eau-douce was not very intelligible, nor was the murmured dialogue that followed, remarkable for coherency. But the language of affection is easily understood. The hour that succeeded, passed like a very few minutes of ordinary life, so far as a computation of time was concerned; and when Mabel recollected herself, and bethought her of the existence of others, her uncle was pacing the cutter's deck in great impatience, and wondering why Jasper should be losing so much of a favourable wind. Her first thought was of him, who was so likely to feel the recent betrayal of her real emotions.

"Oh! Jasper!" she exclaimed, like one suddenly self-convicted—"the Pathfinder!"

Eau-douce fairly trembled, not with unmanly apprehension, but with the painful conviction of the pang he had given

his friend ; and he looked in all directions, in the expectation of seeing his person. But Pathfinder had withdrawn, with a tact and a delicacy, that might have done credit to the sensibility and breeding of a courtier. For several minutes the two lovers sate, silently waiting his return, uncertain what propriety required of them, under circumstances so marked, and so peculiar. At length they beheld their friend advancing slowly towards them, with a thoughtful and even pensive air.

"I now understand what you meant, Jasper, by speaking without a tongue, and hearing without an ear," he said, when close enough to the tree to be heard. "Yes, I understand it, now, I do, and a very pleasant sort of discourse it is, when one can hold it with Mabel Dunham. Ah's me !—I told the sarjeant I wasn't fit for her ; that I was too old, too ignorant, and too wild, like—but he *would* have it otherwise."

Jasper and Mabel sate, resembling Milton's picture of our first parents, when the consciousness of sin first laid its leaden weight on their souls. Neither spoke, neither even moved ; though both, at that moment, fancied they could part with their new-found happiness, in order to restore their friend to his peace of mind. Jasper was pale as death ; but, in Mabel, maiden modesty had caused the blood to mantle on her cheeks, until their bloom was heightened to a richness that was scarce equalled in her hours of light-hearted buoyancy and joy. As the feeling, which, in her sex, always accompanies the security of love returned, threw its softness and tenderness over her countenance, she was singularly beautiful. Pathfinder gazed at her, with an intentness he did not endeavour to conceal, and then he fairly laughed in his own way, and with a sort of wild exultation, as men that are untutored are wont to express their delight. This momentary indulgence, however, was expiated by the pang that followed the sudden consciousness that this glorious young creature was lost to him for ever. It required a full minute for this simple-minded being to recover from the shock of this conviction ; and then he recovered his dignity of manner, speaking with gravity—almost with solemnity.

"I have always known, Mabel Dunham, that men have their gifts," he said ; "but I'd forgotten that it did not belong to mine, to please the young, and beautiful, and

l'arned. I hope the mistake has been no very heavy sin ; and if it was, I've been heavily punished for it, I have. Nay, Mabel, I know what you'd say, but it's unnecessary ; I *feel* it all, and that is as good as if I *heard* it all. I've had a bitter hour, Mabel—I've had a very bitter hour, lad—"

"Hour !" echoed Mabel, as the other first used the word ; the tell-tale blood, which had begun to ebb towards her heart, rushing again tumultuously to her very temples. "Surely not an hour, Pathfinder!"

"Hour !" exclaimed Jasper, at the same instant—"no—no—my worthy friend, it is not ten minutes since you left us !"

"Well, it may be so ; though to me it has seemed to be a day. I begin to think, however, that the happy count time by minutes, and the miserable count it by months. But we will talk no more of this ; it is all over now, and many words about it, will make you no happier, while they will only tell me what I've lost ; and quite likely how much I deserved to lose her. No—no—Mabel, 'tis useless to interrupt me ; I admit it all, and your gainsaying it, though it be so well meant, cannot change my mind. Well, Jasper, she is yours ; and though it's hard to think it, I do believe you'll make her happier than I could, for your gifts are better suited to do so, though I would have strived hard to do as much, if I know myself, I would. I ought to have known better than to believe the sarjeant ; and I ought to have put faith in what Mabel told me at the head of the lake, for reason and judgment might have shown me its truth ; but it is so pleasant to think what we wish, and mankind so easily over-persuade us, when we over-persuade ourselves. But what's the use in talking of it, as I said afore ? It's true, Mabel seemed to be consenting, though it all came from a wish to please her father, and from being skeary about the savages—"

"Pathfinder !"

"I understand you, Mabel, and have no hard feelings, I hav'n't. I sometimes think I should like to live in your neighbourhood, that I might look at your happiness ; but on the whole, it's better I should quit the 55th altogether, and go back to the 60th, which is my natyve rijement, as it might be. It would have been better, perhaps, had I never left it, though my sarvices were much wanted in this quarter, and

I'd been with some of the 55th, years ago—Sarjeant Dunham, for instance, when he was in another corps. Still, Jasper, I do not regret that I've known you—”

“And me, Pathfinder!” impetuously interrupted Mabel—“do you regret having known *me*?—could I think so, I should never be at peace with myself!”

“You, Mabel!” returned the guide, taking the hand of our heroine, and looking up into her countenance with guileless simplicity, but earnest affection—“how could I be sorry that a ray of the sun came across the gloom of a cheerless day? that light has broken in upon darkness, though it remained so short a time! I do not flatter myself with being able to march quite as light-hearted, as I once used to could, or to sleep as sound, for some time to come; but I shall always remember how near I was to being undesarvedly happy, I shall. So far from blaming you, Mabel, I only blame myself for being so vain as to think it possible I could please such a creatur’; for, sartainly, you told me how it was, when we talked it over, on the mountain, and I ought to have believed you, then; for I do suppose it’s nat’ral that young women should know their own minds better than their fathers. Ah’s me! It’s settled now, and nothing remains but for me to take leave of you, that you may depart; I feel that Master Cap must be impatient, and there is danger of his coming on shore to look for us all.”

“To take leave!” exclaimed Mabel.

“Leave!” echoed Jasper: “you do not mean to quit us, my friend?”

“’Tis best, Mabel—’tis altogether best, Eau-douce; and it’s wisest. I could live and die in your company, if I only followed feeling; but, if I follow reason, I shall quit you here. You will go back to Oswego, and become man and wife as soon as you arrive; for all that is determined with Master Cap, who hankers after the sea again, and who knows what is to happen: while I shall return to the wilderness and my Maker. Come, Mabel,” continued Pathfinder, rising, and drawing nearer to our heroine, with grave decorum, “kiss me. Jasper will not grudge me one kiss: then we’ll part.”

“Oh! Pathfinder,” exclaimed Mabel, falling into the arms of the guide, and kissing his cheeks again and again, with a

freedom and warmth she had been far from manifesting while held to the bosom of Jasper—"God bless you, dearest Pathfinder! You will come to us hereafter. We shall see you again. When old, you will come to our dwelling, and let me be a daughter to you?"

"Yes—that's it"—returned the guide, almost gasping for breath: "I'll try to think of it in that way. You're more befitting to be my daughter, than to be my wife; you are. Farewell, Jasper. Now we'll go to the canoe; it's time you were on board."

The manner in which Pathfinder led the way to the shore, was solemn and calm. As soon as he reached the canoe, he again took Mabel by the hands, held her at the length of his own arms, and gazed wistfully into her face, until the unbidden tears rolled out of the fountains of feeling, and trickled down his rugged cheeks in streams.

"Bless me, Pathfinder;" said Mabel, kneeling reverently at his feet. "Oh! at least bless me, before we part."

That untutored, but noble-minded being, did as she desired; and, aiding her to enter the canoe, seemed to tear himself away as one snaps a strong and obstinate cord. Before he retired, however, he took Jasper by the arm, and led him a little aside, when he spoke as follows:—

"You're kind of heart, and gentle by natur', Jasper; but we are both rough and wild, in comparison with that dear creatur'. Be careful of her, and never show the roughness of man's natur' to her soft disposition. You'll get to understand her, in time; and the Lord who governs the lake and the forest alike—who looks upon virtue with a smile, and upon vice with a frown—keep you happy, and worthy to be so!"

Pathfinder made a sign for his friend to depart; and he stood leaning on his rifle, until the canoe had reached the side of the Scud. Mabel wept as if her heart would break; nor did her eyes once turn from the open spot in the glade, where the form of the Pathfinder was to be seen, until the cutter had passed a point that completely shut out the island. When last in view, the sinewy frame of this extraordinary man was as motionless as if it were a statue set up in that solitary place, to commemorate the scenes of which it had so lately been the witness.

CHAPTER XV.

"Oh! let me only breathe the air,
The blessed air that's breathed by thee;
And, whether on its wings it bear
Healing or death, 'tis sweet to me!"

MOORE.

PATHFINDER was accustomed to solitude; but, when the Scud had actually disappeared, he was almost overcome with a sense of his loneliness. Never before had he been conscious of his isolated condition in the world; for his feelings had gradually been accustoming themselves to the blandishments and wants of social life; particularly as the last were connected with the domestic affections. Now, all had vanished, as it might be, in one moment; and he was left equally without companions, and without hope. Even Chingachgook had left him, though it was but temporarily; still his presence was missed at the precise instant which might be termed the most critical in our hero's life.

Pathfinder stood leaning on his rifle, in the attitude described in the last chapter, a long time after the Scud had disappeared. The rigidity of his limbs seemed permanent; and none but a man accustomed to put his muscles to the severest proof, could have maintained that posture, with its marble-like inflexibility, for so great a length of time. At length, he moved away from the spot; the motion of the body being preceded by a sigh that seemed to heave up from the very depths of his bosom.

It was a peculiarity of this extraordinary being, that his senses and his limbs, for all practical purposes, were never at fault, let the mind be pre-occupied with other interests, as much as it might. On the present occasion, neither of these great auxiliaries failed him; but, though his thoughts were exclusively occupied with Mabel, her beauty, her preference of Jasper, her tears and her departure, he moved in a direct line to the spot where June still remained, which was the grave of her husband. The conversation that followed passed in the language of the Tuscaroras, which Pathfinder spoke fluently; but, as that tongue is understood only by the ex-

tremely learned, we shall translate it freely into the English ; preserving, as far as possible, the tone of thought of each interlocutor, as well as the peculiarities of manner.

June had suffered her hair to fall about her face, had taken a seat on a stone that had been dug from the excavation made by the grave, and was hanging over the spot that contained the body of Arrowhead, unconscious of the presence of any other. She believed, indeed, that all had left the island but herself, and the tread of the guide's moccasined foot was too noiseless, rudely to undeceive her.

Pathfinder stood gazing at the woman, for several minutes, in mute attention. The contemplation of her grief, the recollection of her irreparable loss, and the view of her desolation, produced a healthful influence on his own feelings ; his reason telling him how much deeper lay the sources of grief, in a young wife, who was suddenly and violently deprived of her husband, than in himself.

"Dew of June," he said, solemnly, but with an earnestness that denoted the strength of his sympathy—"you are not alone in your sorrow. Turn, and let your eyes look upon a friend."

"June has no longer any friend !" the woman answered : "Arrowhead has gone to the happy hunting-grounds, and there is no one left to care for June. The Tuscaroras would chase her from their wigwams ; the Iroquois are hateful in her eyes, and she could not look at them. No !—leave June to starve over the grave of her husband."

"This will never do—this will never do. 'Tis ag'in reason and right. You believe in the Manitou, June?"

"He has hid his face from June, because he is angry. He has left her alone, to die."

"Listen to one, who has had a long acquaintance with red natur', though he has a white birth, and white gifts. When the Manitou of a pale-face wishes to produce good in a pale-face heart, he strikes it with grief, for it is in our sorrows, June, that we look with the truest eyes into ourselves, and with the farthest-sighted eyes too, as respects right. The Great Spirit wishes you well, and he has taken away the chief, lest you should be led astray, by his wily tongue, and get to be a Mingo in your disposition, as you were already in your company."

"Arrowhead was a great chief!" returned the woman, proudly.

"He had his merits, he had ; and he had his demerits, too. But, June, you're not desarted, nor will you be soon. Let your grief out—let it out, according to natur', and when the proper time comes, I shall have more to say to you."

Pathfinder now went to his own canoe, and he left the island. In the course of the day, June heard the crack of his rifle, once or twice ; and as the sun was setting, he re-appeared, bringing her birds ready cooked, and of a delicacy and flavour that might have tempted the appetite of an epicure. This species of intercourse lasted a month, June obstinately refusing to abandon the grave of her husband, all that time, though she still accepted the friendly offerings of her protector. Occasionally they met and conversed, Pathfinder sounding the state of the woman's feelings ; but the interviews were short, and far from frequent. June slept in one of the huts, and she laid down her head in security, for she was conscious of the protection of a friend, though Pathfinder invariably retired at night, to an adjacent island, where he had built himself a hut.

At the end of the month, however, the season was getting to be too far advanced to render her situation pleasant to June. The trees had lost their leaves, and the nights were becoming cold and wintry. It was time to depart.

At this moment, Chingachgook re-appeared. He had a long and confidential interview on the island, with his friend. June witnessed their movements, and she saw that her guardian was distressed. Stealing to his side, she endeavoured to soothe his sorrow, with a woman's gentleness, and with a woman's instinct.

"Thank you, June—thank you"—he said—" 't is well meant, though it's useless. But it is time to quit this place. To-morrow, we shall depart. You will go with us, for now you've got to feel reason."

June assented in the meek manner of an Indian woman, and she withdrew to pass the remainder of her time, near the grave of Arrowhead. Regardless of the hour and the season, the young widow did not pillow her head during the whole of that autumnal night. She sat near the spot that held the remains of her husband, and prayed, in the man-

ner of her people, for his success on the endless path on which he had so lately gone, and for their reunion in the land of the just. Humble and degraded as she would have seemed in the eyes of the sophisticated and unreflecting, the image of God was on her soul, and it vindicated its divine origin by aspirations and feelings that would have surprised those who, feigning more, feel less.

In the morning the three departed ; Pathfinder earnest and intelligent in all he did, the Great Serpent silent and imitative, and June meek, resigned, but sorrowful. They went in two canoes, that of the woman being abandoned. Chingachgook led the way, and Pathfinder followed, the course being up stream. Two days they paddled westward, and as many nights they encamped on islands. Fortunately the weather became mild, and when they reached the lake, it was found smooth, and glassy as a pond. It was the Indian summer, and the calms, and almost the blandness of June, slept in the hazy atmosphere.

On the morning of the third day, they passed the mouth of the Oswego, where the fort and the sleeping ensign invited them in vain to enter. Without casting a look aside, Chingachgook paddled past the dark waters of the river, and Pathfinder still followed, in silent industry. The ramparts were crowded with spectators ; but Lundie, who knew the persons of his old friends, refused to allow them to be even hailed.

It was noon, when Chingachgook entered a little bay, where the Scud lay at anchor, in a sort of road-stead. A small, ancient clearing was on the shore, and near the margin of the lake, was a log dwelling, recently and completely, though rudely fitted up. There was an air of frontier comfort, and of frontier abundance around the place, though it was necessarily wild and solitary. Jasper stood on the shore ; and when Pathfinder landed, he was the first to take him by the hand. The meeting was simple, but very cordial. No questions were asked, it being apparent that Chingachgook had made the necessary explanations. Pathfinder never squeezed his friend's hand more cordially, than in this interview ; and he even laughed cordially in his face, as he told him how happy and well he appeared.

“Where is she, Jasper—where is she?” the guide at

length whispered ; for, at first, he had seemed to be afraid to trust himself with the question.

"She is waiting for us in the house, my dear friend, where you see that June has already hastened before us."

"June may use a lighter step to meet Mabel, but she cannot carry a lighter heart. And so, lad, you found the chaplain at the garrison, and all was soon settled?"

"We were married within a week after we left you, and Master Cap departed next day—you have forgotten to inquire about your friend, Salt-water—"

"Not I—not I. The Serpent has told me all that ; and then I love to hear so much of Mabel and her happiness, I do. Did the child smile, or did she weep when the ceremony was over?"

"She did both, my friend ; but——"

"Yes, that's their natur'; tearful and cheerful. Ah's me ! they are very pleasant to us of the woods ; and I do believe, I should think all right, whatever Mabel might do. And do you think, Jasper, that she thought of me, at all, on that joyful occasion?"

"I know she did, Pathfinder ; and she thinks of you, and talks of you daily—almost hourly. None love you, as we do !"

"I know few love me better than yourself, Jasper. Chingachgook is, perhaps, now the only creatur' of whom I can say that. Well, there's no use in putting it off any longer ; it must be done, and may as well be done at once ; so, Jasper, lead the way, and I'll endeavour to look upon her sweet countenance, once more."

Jasper did lead the way, and they were soon in the presence of Mabel. The latter met her late suitor, with a bright blush, and her limbs trembled so, she could hardly stand. Still, her manner was affectionate and frank. During the hour of Pathfinder's visit, for it lasted no longer, though he ate in the dwelling of his friends, one who was expert in tracing the workings of the human mind, might have seen a faithful index to the feelings of Mabel, in her manner to Pathfinder and her husband. With the latter, she still had a little of the reserve that usually accompanies young wedlock ; but the tones of her voice were kinder, even than common ; the glance of her eye was tender, and she seldom looked at him

without the glow that tinged her cheeks, betraying the existence of feelings that habit and time had not yet soothed into absolute tranquillity. With Pathfinder, all was earnest, sincere—even anxious; but the tones never trembled, the eye never fell, and if the cheek flushed, it was with the emotions that are connected with concern.

At length the moment came, when Pathfinder must go his way. Chingachgook had already abandoned the canoes, and was posted on the margin of the woods, where a path led into the forest. Here he calmly waited to be joined by his friend. As soon as the latter was aware of this fact, he rose in a solemn manner, and took his leave.

“I’ve sometimes thought that my own fate has been a little hard,” he said, “but that of this woman, Mabel, has shamed me into reason—”

“June remains, and lives with me,” eagerly interrupted our heroine.

“So I comprehend it. If any body can bring her back from her grief, and make her wish to live, you can do it, Mabel, though I’ve misgivings about even your success. The poor creatur’ is without a tribe, as well as without a husband, and it’s not easy to reconcile the feelings to both losses. Ah’s me!—what have I to do with other people’s miseries, and marriages, as if I hadn’t affliction enough of my own? Don’t speak to me, Mabel—don’t speak to me, Jasper—let me go my way, in peace and like a man. I’ve seen your happiness, and that is a great deal, and I shall be able to bear my own sorrow, all the better for it. No—I’ll never kiss you ag’in, Mabel; I’ll never kiss you ag’in—Here’s my hand, Jasper—squeeze it, boy, squeeze it; no fear of its giving way, for it’s the hand of a man—and, now Mabel do you take it,—nay, you must not do this—” preventing Mabel from kissing it, and bathing it in her tears—“you must not do this—”

“Pathfinder—” asked Mabel; “when shall we see you, again?”

“I’ve thought of that too; yes, I’ve thought of that, I have. If the time should ever come when I can look upon you altogether as a sister, Mabel, or a child—it might be better to say a child, since you’re young enough to be my daughter—depend on it, I’ll come back; for it would lighten

my very heart to witness your gladness. But if I cannot—farewell—farewell—the sarjeant was wrong—yes, the sarjeant was wrong!”

This was the last the Pathfinder ever uttered to the ears of Jasper Western and Mabel Dunham. He turned away, as if the words choked him; and was quickly at the side of his friend. As soon as the latter saw him approach, he shouldered his own burthen, and glided in among the trees, without waiting to be spoken to. Mabel, her husband, and June, all watched the form of the Pathfinder, in the hope of receiving a parting gesture, or a stolen glance of the eye; but he did not look back. Once or twice, they thought they saw his head shake, as one trembles in bitterness of spirit; and a toss of the hand was given, as if he knew that he was watched; but a tread whose vigour no sorrow could enfeeble, soon bore him out of view, and he was lost in the depths of the forest.

Neither Jasper nor his wife ever beheld the Pathfinder again. They remained for another year on the banks of Ontario; and then the pressing solicitations of Cap induced them to join him in New York, where Jasper eventually became a successful and respected merchant. Thrice Mabel received valuable presents of furs, at intervals of years; and her feelings told her whence they came, though no name accompanied the gift. Later in life, still, when the mother of several youths, she had occasion to visit the interior; and found herself on the banks of the Mohawk, accompanied by her sons, the eldest of whom was capable of being her protector. On that occasion, she observed a man, in a singular guise, watching her in the distance, with an intentness that induced her to inquire into his pursuits and character. She was told he was the most renowned hunter of that portion of the State—it was after the Revolution—a being of great purity of character, and of as marked peculiarities; and that he was known in that region of country by the name of the Leather-stocking. Further than this, Mrs. Western could not ascertain; though the distant glimpse, and singular deportment of this unknown hunter, gave her a sleepless night, and cast a shade of melancholy over her still lovely face, that lasted many a day.

As for June, the double loss of husband and tribe produced the effect that Pathfinder had foreseen. She died in the cot-

tage of Mabel, on the shores of the lake ; and Jasper conveyed her body to the island ; where he interred it by the side of that of Arrowhead.

Lundie lived to marry his ancient love ; and retired a war-worn and battered veteran : but his name has been rendered illustrious in our own time, by the deeds of a younger brother, who succeeded to his territorial title, which, however, was shortly after merged in one earned by his valour on the ocean.

THE END.







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